THE SHAKESPEARE ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

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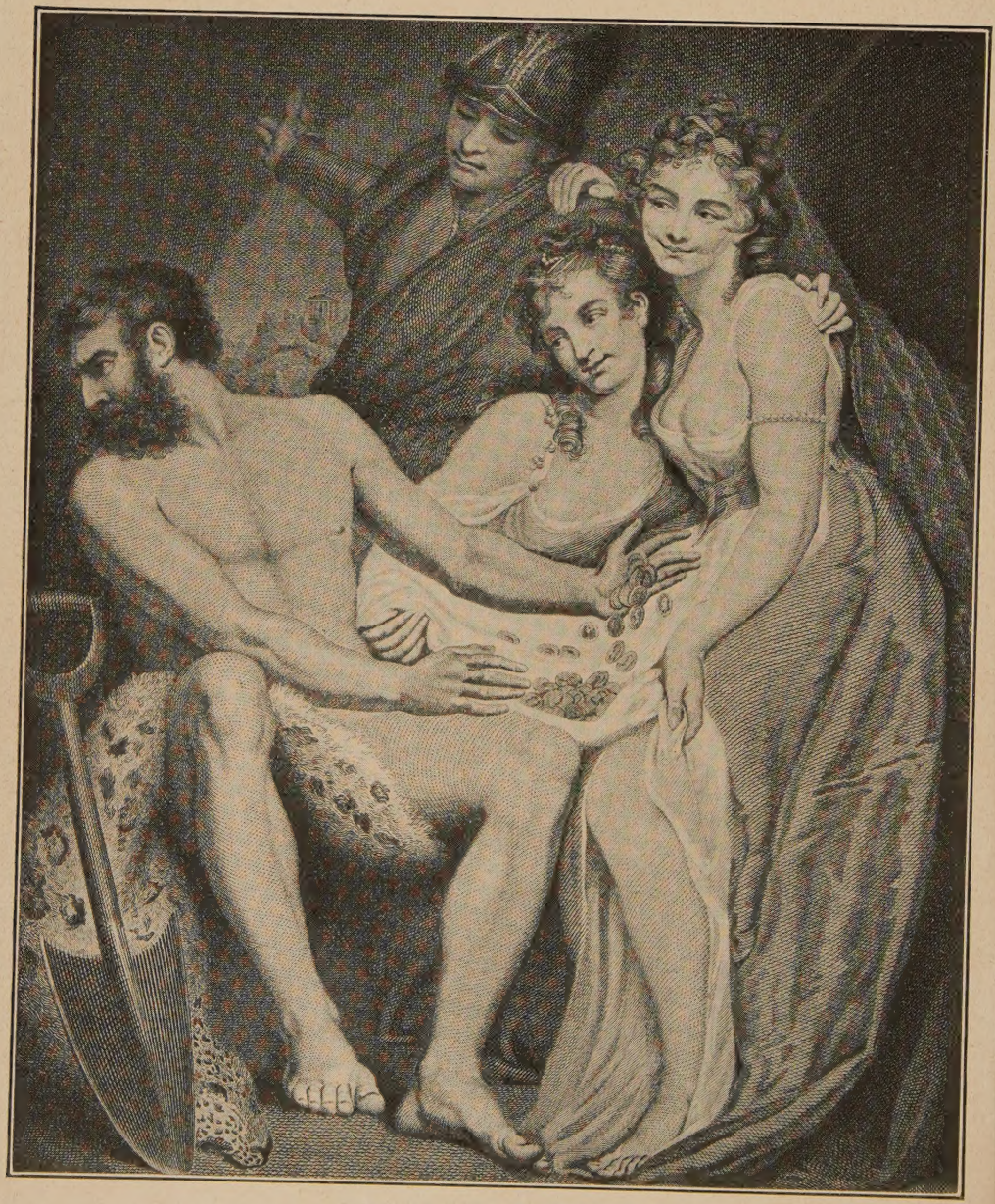

TIMON OF ATHENS

Act 4, Scene 3

(Illustration by Northcote)

'SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY'

By WILLIAM T. HASTINGS

I.

THE merits of Miss Spurgeon's recent study[1] have been set forth fully in the reviews. It is very readable and in some respects very informative. The reviews, however, have not for the most part discriminated between the reliability of the data accumulated and that of the inferences from them; nor have they asked how much in the end has been added to our knowledge of Shakspere's personality, his ideas, and the themes of his plays.

In view of the intricacy and trickiness of the undertaking, and the devotion with which it has been carried on, it seems an ungrateful task to make unfavorable comment on the book, as a whole or in detail. Yet in many respects it is disappointing. In the interest of brevity, the grounds for this feeling will be stated without any attempt to balance merits and defects.

II.

When all is said and done, *Shakespeare's Imagery* tells us little about Shakspere that we did not know, and it is full of both trivial and dubious inferences. We are told, without much justification, that he was physically agile, blushed easily, was a strong swimmer, didn't care for fishing but liked bowling and was an expert archer, often leaned over a bridge at Stratford looking at a particular eddy which can still be seen, as a boy spent much time in the kitchen, suffered from acid stomach, in middle life treated the plague more seriously than when young, in his dreams often saw himself as a king. "We crave knowledge," we are told, of these things; and from them the author builds up a sketch of "Shakespeare the Man". It is certainly open to much question, and is certainly incomplete; she describes him, for instance, as interested in "eating, drinking, sleeping," but says nothing of his very obvious interest in loving.

[1] *Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us.* Macmillan. 1935.

It is a peculiarity of the book that it is over-delicate. In speaking of the "classes of men," for example, included in Shakspere's images, one class frequently alluded to, the bawd, is not mentioned. The metaphors drawn from lust and the many audacious sexual quibbles are almost completely passed over; and their psychological significance is not indicated. She does not imagine him regarding Cressida or other wantons with amusement. In the twentieth century there is no need to bowdlerize.

Miss Spurgeon goes along with the "autobiographical critics" to an unfortunate extent, supposing *Hamlet, Troilus, Measure for Measure, Lear,* and *Timon* to be the fruit of deep perturbation: "It is as certain as anything can be, short of direct proof, that he had been hurt" by false friends. She praises extravagantly the mystical essays of a fellow collector of images, Mr. G. Wilson Knight, and now and then slips into mysticism herself.

There is, finally, a basic difficulty in the whole business of interpreting the imagery. From the imagery we are to derive (1) clues to Shakspere's life, habits, and personality, (2) clues to his thought, ideas, philosophy, (3) guidance in determining the themes of his plays. The special value assumed for the images is that they rise unbidden from the well of the author's "unconscious". Now the trouble is that this is not true of all the images and that therefore the interpreter must constantly face the almost impossible task of discrimination among them. *A priori* one would say that images which give clues to Shakspere's philosophy would be less "unconscious" than those of the first category mentioned, and that to an even greater degree images related to or emphasizing the themes of the plays would have been consciously employed. Miss Spurgeon herself seems sometimes to imply that Shakspere consciously multiplies such images in the histories and tragedies.

In point of fact, there are a variety of influences outside the unconscious mind which operate. There is, first, the subject which is being treated. For this Miss Spurgeon sometimes makes allowance, but its influence may well be much more pervasive than she admits. Related to this is the influence of the characterization. The dramatist constantly

builds character, and conveys the mood of character, by conscious control of the speaker's imagery and ideas. The images thus controlled reveal the character's mind rather than the dramatist's. This, too, Miss Spurgeon allows for only infrequently. Thirdly, there is the matter of association of ideas. The book has a good short chapter on this subject, but outside that chapter there is hardly any allowance for the powerful influence on Shakspere of purely verbal associations. There is also no account taken of his individual tritenesses or habitual repetitions in diction, such as his use of "taint" and "pluck", or of his hobby (surely of no biographical significance) for certain metaphors, such as those connected with putting on clothes or knowing one's lesson. These habits provide a large number of recurrent images which may be regarded as meaningless accidents. Again, there is little or no account taken of the conscious "follow through" of figures from clause to clause and speech to speech. The fact that this is primarily a point in rhetoric does not lessen its importance. It not only affects the number of images, but indicates further need to qualify the fundamental assumption that the images flow unconsciously from the mind and are therefore peculiarly significant. Finally, one might say that if it be assumed that it was a part of Shakspere's art to develop themes in his plays, the value of the imagery in defining the theme is in direct proportion to its conscious employment; the more accidental or unconscious, the less significant it is.

III.

The remainder of this article consists of a series of notes and memoranda inspired by particular passages in the book. Some of the comments may be mistaken, but it is hoped that none are captious or irrelevant. The effect of them, if valid, is left to each reader to decide.

p. 28. "Bacon . . . believes [war] to be as necessary to a State as healthy exercise to a man's body. . . Shakespeare hates war and condemns it. . ."

This is too simple a statement of the matter. Bacon's "belief" is merely an Elizabethan commonplace. It appears more than once in Shakspere; see *Hamlet,* IV. iv. 27 and *1 Henry IV*, IV. ii.

pp. 31-32. It was used by Nashe in *Pierce Penniless*[2] and by Sir John Cheke.[3] It is characteristic of Shakspere that he should make King Henry IV and his son King Henry V express on this point completely opposite sentiments. *Henry V* comes near being a glorification of war.

p. 38 "Except for the love-war similes in his two poems and in *All's Well,* Shakespeare [unlike Chapman] has surprisingly little" imagery of the castle of love type.

But there is a good deal, more or less disguised, in Shakspere; as in *Hamlet,* I. iii. 122-23: "Set your entreatment at a higher rate than a command to parley", *Henry V,* V. ii. 347-50, and *A Lover's* Complaint, 176-77. See also *Cymbeline,* III, iv. 136-37, *Romeo and Juliet,* I. i. 218, etc.

p. 39. "Dekker alone . . . draws images from the shoemaker's craft . . ."

But the awl is the means to a quibble in *Julius Caesar,* I. i. 25.

p. 46 The bawdy wind and the wanton wind are not mentioned.

p. 64 "Shakespeare's keen sense of colour contrast . . ."

The black-white contrast is one of the most trite of Elizabethan antitheses.

p. 78 "Shakespeare has clearly a very acute sense of smell, and is peculiarly sensitive to bad smells . . ."

But other Elizabethan dramatists and pamphleteers find bad smells a fruitful subject of allusion.

pp. 83, 91 Has Shakspere an especially "delicate and discriminating palate" and a "difference in feeling" from Marlowe regarding flowers? or is it merely Shakspere's superior command of language?

p. 99 "Only one who was himself an experienced swimmer . . ."

Doubtful inference.

p. 115 In *Hamlet,* IV. v. 20 "It spills itself . . . spilt", the verb "spill" = destroy, as in *Lear,* III. ii. 8. There is no allusion to an overfull jug or bowl.

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[2] First noted by Steevens.

[3] Cited by Wilson: *New Comb. Sh.,* 221.

In *Henry V,* IV. ii. 41 "Their ragged curtains . . ." refers to the ensigns of the army and probably had no association with kitchens.

"Foul cankering rust" (*Venus and Adonis,* 767) and "dust" are found in other places than kitchens.

p. 124 "The tiny size of the eye of [a needle] is used with effect by Thersites . . . " There is no suggestion that the allusion to Helen's needle is highly obscene, as in Mrs. Quickly's defense of her gentlewomen (*Henry V,* II. i. 37), and involves calling Ajax an impotent idiot.

p. 128 The "screw" in Lady Macbeth's famous phrase is not a reference to driving home a wood screw but either to tightening the peg of a musical instrument (Schmidt) or to winding up such a weapon as an arquebus.

p. 131 ". . . all Shakespeare's images from the plague up to 1600 are light . . . whereas after 1600 every one of them is serious, and is used in such a way that the gravity and horror of the disease are emphasized."

But: *Venus and Adonis,* 508-10, "The plague is banished by thy breath . . ." is early and serious; on the other hand the reference cited from *Troilus and Cressida* is not grave in tone, and the same play contains several scurrilous allusions; Cleopatra's "The most infectious pestilence upon thee" (II. v. 61) is not in a grave context; and the allusions in *Othello,* II. i. 252 ("a pestilent complete knave"), and in *Hamlet,* IV. v. 91 ("pestilent speeches"), though expressing scorn, indicate no greater fear of the plague.

p. 135 "Shakespeare's interest in the compounding and action of drugs . . . is to be seen in the story of many of his plays . . ."

This remark seems absurdly to imply that his interest in drugs led him to write *All's Well, Cymbeline, Romeo and Juliet,* etc.

p. 145 Where are the bawds?

p. 146 ff. Is it fair to select as Shakspere's the views of love expressed by certain characters and pass over

almost completely the cynicism or scurrility of Mercutio, Jacques, Touchstone, Thersites, Parolles, Iago, Emilia, Iachimo?

p. 149 ff. Images dealing with the physical aspects of passion are omitted; *e.g., Romeo and Juliet,* II. i. 23-26, and *Henry V,* V. ii. 347-50.

p. 152 How much is the "boundless timeless character of love", as set forth in the passages quoted, a matter of the dramatist's conviction? May it not be merely his record of the perennial superlatives of lovers?

p. 156 ". . . his courage being no longer sapped by secrecy and duplicity, he is enabled to die fighting bravely."

This is a curious description of Macbeth's courage of desperation, "valiant fury".

p. 158 There is a complete misinterpretaion of the "love and fear" passage in *Troilus and Cressida* (III. ii. 80-82). It is interpreted as "a thoroughly Shakespearian way of saying that fear is a blinding, distorting, debasing emotion, and that in perfect love there exists no place for it."

On the contrary, the text gives us a perfectly simple and unmetaphysical remark by Troilus about love, and an obscene reply by Cressida.

Troilus says: "There is nothing to be afraid of, nothing ugly or unpleasing ['no monster'], in all the dalliance of love, the acts of the drama of love ['Cupid's pageant']."

Cressida, picking up the word "monster", so kindly offered, retorts with phallic insinuation: "Nor nothing monstrous, neither?"

p. 162 In "a will most rank" (*Othello,* III. iii. 232) and "rank corruption" (*Hamlet,* IV. iv. 148) the reference is not to evil smell. The meaning of "rank" in both phrases is derived from the meaning "luxuriant growth"; it means "sick (of hypertrophy)"—See Schmidt: *Shakespeare Lexicon,* II. 938.

p. 170 "Ulysses . . . points out that any good in us has its existence only by virtue of its effect on others, for a man possesses it only by reflection . . ."

This is, of course, a purely dramatic sentiment, a part of Ulysses' crafty plan to rouse Achilles. Compare the sentiments on the same subject put into the mouth of Iago, in two passages which directly contradict each other: *Othello,* II. iii. 267-70 and III. iii. 155-61.

p. 171 "Shakespeare has instinctively grasped for himself the old Platonic doctrine that the soul can perceive beauty only in so far as it is itself beautiful . . . " *Lear,* IV. ii. 38-39 is quoted.
But Iago frankly recognizes the goodness of Othello and declares that Cassio "hath a daily beauty in his life". Similarly, Iachimo recognizes and describes magnificently the physical and moral beauty of Imogen. Again, then, we are dealing merely with dramatically appropriate sentiments, finely expressed.

pp. 177-80 It is very doubtful that *Troilus and Cressida* is a "tragic drama" and that its "central theme" is as stated here. Miss Spurgeon's view of the metaphysical upshot of the play (top of p. 180) she confirms by lines (III. ii. 160-61) which are, in fact, the climax of a coy speech by Cressida—part of her technique of verbal ogling or angling.

p. 182 Death as a lover is an Elizabethan commonplace.

p. 194 "Maw" means "stomach", not "mouth".
In "caves and womby vaultages of France" there is no allusion to hollow places and death. "Womby vaultages" = "caves"; and the association is not with death but with reverberation of sound. *Cf.* "the cave where Echo lies" (*Romeo and Juliet,* II. ii. 162).

pp. 207-08 ". . . the mainspring of his actions . . . one thought recurring . . . that by, in and for ourselves we are nothing; we exist only just in so far as we touch our fellows . . . "
The passages cited in support of this Shaksperian creed are considerably contaminated by their

source. The first (*Venus and Adonis,* 163) employs this doctrine as a means to a seduction. The second (*Troilus and Cressida,* III. iii. 99 ff.) is from the Ulysses-Achilles argument; see note on p. 170, above. The third is from a speech by Timon of Athens (I. ii. 94-100) which in itself carries the clear note of sentimental folly and by its context is underscored for derision.

p. 246 The personifications in *King John* are well described. But in *Romeo and Juliet* they are equally striking and very numerous. Are they due to the theme, or is their significance chronological, a stylistic fancy of Shakspere's in the year 1595?

pp. 248-49 ". . . King John . . . is always pictured as a *portion* of a body only, which seems in some strange way to create of him something specially sinister and horrible."

Some readers will surely think this suggestion fanciful. At any rate, two of the supporting passages are misapplied. In the last scene it is *not* "emphasized" that John is "but a fragment;" the phrase "one little hair" is not intended to reduce him from a body to a hair filament. The detail comes in as a climax in a passage employing imagery from a ship:

> The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burn'd,
> And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail
>
> Are turned to one thread, one little hair . . .

We have "tackle" = "shrouds", with the double meaning of sail ropes and heart strings. Then the metaphor develops naturally by verbal association: rope dwindles to thread and then to a tiny thread of the dimension of a hair. *Cf.* "thread of life", which was especially associated with Atropos and the ending of life (Schmidt, II. 1217).

Again, "module of confounded royalty" does not refer to John as a fragment but as a model (*i.e.,* a representation, image), in a derogatory sense.

pp. 273-75 The astronomical imagery in *All's Well* is of no significance. It is conventional—see the conflicting views of planetary influence expressed by Gloucester, Kent, and Edmund—and its use was naturally suggested by the difference in birth of Bertram and Helena.

pp. 296-97 The presence of "the theme of buying and selling" in *Cymbeline* may be doubted by skeptical persons. Miss Spurgeon prefers to think it was "a subject much in Shakespeare's mind at the time", because the metaphors seem dragged in. The first passage cited (I. i. 104) is a characteristic piece of verbal ingenuity, paradox for its own sake. The second and third (I. i. 146 and II. iv. 102) are merely the familiar Shaksperian trick of repetition or recurrence. Found in most of the plays, it is a psychological curiosity, no more.

pp. 300-308 The symbolism traced in *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* is, as the author confesses with respect to the latter, highly subjective. "The dominant image in the *Tempest* . . . is not expressed through any one single group of images . . . but rather through the action . . ."; *i.e.,* the dominant image is not an image. The fact that "the most noticeable thing" in a sub-tropical isle is the many noises (p. 301) does not signify that in *The Tempest* Shakspere proves his power of intuitive or transcendental perception of truth.

p. 320 "Peace, with her wheaten garland" (*Hamlet,* IV. vii. 182) is not a "radiant touch of beauty" but a figure in a cartoon; see the context.

pp. 320-22 "The disgust at woman's wantonness . . . in terms of physical appetite and food."

More disgust is assumed than is present. Moreover, in three passages at least which are not cited here the food metaphor is applied not merely to lust but to love: Thaisa's "wishing him my meat" (*Pericles,* II. iii. 32), the poet's address to "sweet love" (*Sonnet* 56), and the Duke Orsino's sea-like hunger (*Twelfth Night,* II. iv. 100-04).

No doubt the association of ideas with its consequent harvest of images was encouraged by the

two common meanings of "appetite", quite as much as by any "revulsion of nature, emotional, moral and spiritual, which translated itself into terms of physical appetite and disgust" (p. 121).

p. 326 In "He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause Within the belt of rule" (*Macbeth,* V. ii. 15), the allusion is not to "a large garment" but to a belly swollen with dropsy.

pp. 331-33 The passages cited in support of the "symbolic idea" in *Macbeth* that "sin is a disease" are somewhat loosely interpreted.

The first two, "And purge it to a sound and pristine health", etc. (V. iii. 52 ff.), and "make us medicines of our great revenge, To cure this deadly grief," (IV. iii. 214-15), though they describe Scotland as sick, do not say she has sinned, indeed make no reference to sin.

Macbeth's crime is not represented as unnatural or as a convulsion of nature, except in the passage in which the prodigies are described. In the cited passages "look'd like a breach in nature" (II. iii. 118) and "a great perturbation in nature" (V. i. 10) "nature" = the human body. "Let the frame of things disjoint" (III. ii. 16) has no apparent relation to the unnaturalness of the murder of Duncan; it is a vivid rephrasing of a commonplace which often recurs in Shakspere.

p. 336 "In *Othello* we see a low type of [animal] life," etc. The contrast with the animals in *Lear* is neat, but so far as *Othello* goes, it is doubtful if much "symbolism" is involved. If there is any, it is sexual symbolism, a fact perfectly concealed by the form of statement: "reptiles, swarming and preying on each other [*i.e.,* "for foul toads To knot and gender in"; "as summer flies are in the shambles, That quicken even with blowing], not out of special ferocity, but just in accordance with their natural instincts, mischievous and irresponsible wild cats [*i.e.,* women are "wild cats in your kitchens"], goats and monkeys [The passage reads

as if they too were mischievous and irresponsible!] . . ."

p. 351 In "With his tinct gilded thee" (*Antony and Cleopatra,* I. v. 37) the allusion is not to Antony as a sun but as the transmuter of base metals into gold.

pp. 367-71 Why not include these: sty (III. iv. 94), paddock, bat, gib (III. iv. 190), brokers, bawds (I. iii. 127, 130)?

Brown University,
Providence, R. I.

———o———

A CORRECTION

Owing probably to the somewhat extensive mileage between New York and Texas, I did not have opportunity to check proof of my "Tabulation of Dates Given for Shakspere's Plays" before it appeared in the January number of the *Bulletin.* Thus at least four errors appeared in my tabulations, which I should like to correct. Adams dates *The Comedy of Errors* 1588-9, and *Macbeth* 1606; Craig places *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at 1590; 1595? Parrott dates *Twelfth Night* 1600. If I inadvertently made other mistakes in the tables, I have not discovered them.

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SPENSER'S "CLOUDED HEAVEN"

By GRACE W. LANDNUM

CHAUCER and Milton have their thousands and Shakspere his ten thousands, but the other of the incomparable four English poets has abundant lip worship but, except for a rapidly increasing number of distinguished specialists, very few to love him. That he still avails over the poetic mind is attested by a story afloat in Louisville, the home of Madison Cawein, at the time of his death. As a lad he read the whole of the thirty-three and more thousand lines of *The Faerie Queene,* and then, unsatisfied, wrote to the publisher of the edition asking for the rest of the work. Of course not every future or already accepted poet has been greedy for more of Spenser. Walter Savage Landor, contrasting his feeling with that of Wordsworth, wrote:

> "Thee gentle Spenser fondly led,
> But me he chiefly sent to bed."

Here this most fastidious of poets is one with the general, to whom Spenser is still caviar, however Landor would dislike the association. Of course Spenser may still remain the most superficially praised and least read of great English poets. He is intensely literary; he is diffuse; his mind is washed with the farthest sea of merchandise from classic, Renaissance and mediæval sources. His reminiscences of this gorgeous traffic are as inveterately co-twisted and involved as the boughs of Wordsworth's yew trees. He has been accepted as wellnigh purely literary, or as a poet with a painter's eye, but that eye rarely on the object in an actual landscape, with some charming exceptions. Agreeing that his interpretation of all phenomena tends to the allegorical, we should not assume that, though neither Shakspere nor Wordsworth, he is incapable of aching joys and dizzy raptures over the pageantry of the actual world. His concern with each of the elements warrants new consideration. His treatment of the sky and of the atmosphere offers us a basis of new evaluation.

Lowell calls him "the last of the poets who went without great difficulty by the great clock of the firmament". His fairy land, though essentially religious and set in the middle ages, forgoes the canonical divisions. Though he mentions

prime, it is morning that rouses to activity his refreshed or over-wearied knights. He watches the horologue a double set. He notes the first morning beams as having been "duld with iron rust" before they peer "through the thick cloud". In marking the blended colors of sunrise he misses the spontaneity of his master, Ariosto, reverts to Vergilian and other classic epithets, but he achieves independently a fine contrast of the pale sky and rosy suffusion in the simile of Britomart's blush:

> The doubtfull Mayd, seeing her self descryde,
> Was all abasht, and her pure yvory
> Into a cleare Carnation suddeine dyde;
> As faire Aurora, rising hastily,
> Doth by her blushing tell, that she did lye
> All night in old Tithonus frosen bed.

Why shall we deny that an actual sunrise over Irish hills suggested the mention of "Phœbus faire out of the east" arising betwixt two shady mountains? It matters not that his terms are often classic—so are Shakspere's. The sun is Phoebus, Phoebus' lamp, or Phaeton (though never Sol), and some epithets are frankly stereotyped. Surely, however, there is variety. We behold the sun as "dancing", "cheerful", "glancing", "scorching", "goodly", "hasty", darting the "arrows of Phoebus", "gleaming with lovely fire", chasing through the "clamping Sky". A monosyllabic line

> The sun that shines so wide and faire.

has the magic simplicity of Coleridge's

> For the blue sky bends over all.

Indeed Spenser's affinity is with the sun, even day's garish eye. Perhaps because he loved the light pre-eminently, he is especially sensitive to its withdrawal. He is much given to tracking the "westering" wheels of Phoebus, visualizing the "billows of the west" in which the sun will steep his "fiery face". However classic these phrases sound, he had abundant opportunity to mark a sunset not only over the lush meadows of his Irish rivers but on the westward passages across St. George's Channel. It may at favorable moments have been as richly colored at sunset as the Aegean of his dreams.

Spenser's spatial imagination is far more Dantesque than Miltonic. Yet too little has been made of his clouds in broad landscapes. The "flocks shrouded in shadow" sug-

gests a Constable. This may be contrasted with the sinister "wide shadow" which in the great final struggle of the Red-cross Knight the huge dragon throws over the valley as a mountain darkens it. A similar effect of different causation is the "broad shadow of a hoare hill". "Shade" and "shady" are favorite words. He depicts with fine effect mingled shade and sunlight, for, some critics to the contrary, he has a gift for chiaroscuro. Transcending all possible conventionality is his exquisite metaphor of Una's smile which "made sunshine in a shady place".

In the analysis of the sources of Spenser's treatment of the elements in the closing canto of the last and fragmentary book of *The Faerie Queene,* the critics are still warring. Whatever be the dominant source, Spenser epitomizes the recurrent imagery of the earlier books in treating the air as a realm of constant change. To survey his epithets for the wind reveals a delight hardly to be matched until Shelley took up his strains. It is "murmuring", "breathing", "empty", "bitter", "hollow", "merry", "fluttering", "whistling", "unstabled", "winged", "gentle", "warbling", "wavering", "boisterous", "nimble", "wrathful", "loose"—and the list might be far extended. His favorite figure of a ship's safe return to land suggests the joy of an actual voyager, not the pale emotion of a Renaissance sonneteer, as he speaks gratefully of the "gentle gale". All even casual readers of the poet recall the delectable blending of the wind and water in the description of the Bower of Bliss in the last canto of the second book. There are other delicate effects of wind, but the boisterous wind motivates prolific imagery. Storms of wind, "hideous" and "wretched", and the frequent tempests are associated with intense and painful emotions. Definite physical combats, which often combine imagery based on animals, are likened to effects of storm. When Spenser is concerned with violent atmospheric conditions of thunder we meet classical imagery, but he borrows vigorously or rephrases older metaphors as in "to thunder blows", "on goodly courser thundering with his feet", and shapes one of his many striking compounds in "to thunder-drive to hell". Many notable similes apply to lightning, as when the flash of axles on plated mail in a terrific encounter is like lightning after thunder.

In Munster, where Spenser probably composed practically all of *The Faerie Queene,* he would have heeded necessarily the almost daily succession of rain, fog, mist, dew, with rare interludes of hail, frost and snow. Gentle precipitation he notes admirably in the "ever drizzling rain upon the loft" in the great Cave of Morpheus passage. Of the rainbow, which must have been a frequent phenomenon under his changeful sky, he makes little. Notable, however, is the apt simile of the final vanishing of the "snowy", the False Florimel, product of a witch's magic:

> As when the daughter of Thaumantes faire
> Hath in a watry cloud displayëd wide
> Her goodly bow which paints the liquid aire:
> That all men wonder at her colours pride;
> All suddenly as one can look aside,
> The glorious picture vanisheth away,
> Ne any token doth thereof abide.

No doubt he is realistic also in acquaintance with the "dewy vapours" of the "western main" at sunset, the "foggie mist" and "the wintry Southwinde from the seabord coast". This may have chilled him to the marrow if he had attended his stern but greatly admired chief, Lord Gray, on a sanguinary expedition on the southwest coast. Imagery derived from dew shows considerable range. From "silver", "pearly", "sweet slumbering," he rises to an imaginative triumph in "dew burning bright blade." Like Chaucer, he is particularly susceptible to the gleam of sunshine on gold and steel. Such lustre and the prismatic effects of dew had so flashed upon his inward eye that he fused the two into a rare metaphor all the more compelling if we read it simply and without symbolism. Mention of "scorched dew" in another scene suggests that he had felt again the charm of similar iridescence. He notes the "frozen dewdrops" as they glitter in the early morning, speaks of "frory lips" and "frost sprinkled" beard. His cherished mountain, Father Mole, seems to him to show a head continually hoary, an impossibility, however, suggesting that some unusual winter had frozen the genial current of his imagination and memory. In regard to hail he is also extravagant, but altogether acceptable. He associates it almost entirely with the din of weapons, the sound of which rings throughout *The Faerie Queene,* as in the actual scenes of Elizabethan Ireland. Less

striking, though abundantly varied, are images from snow. But in the whole of Spenser's poetry he mentions ice only twice, except additionally in reference to an icicled beard. Recollection of penetrating cold, which he must have felt even in the mild climate of southern Ireland, appears in realistic details. He matches Shakspere's "Dick the shepherd blows his nail" with January's effort "to blow his nails to warm them if he may".

One other realm, that of the sky with moon or clouds, completes our survey. Occasionally we find broad effects as in "glims of starry night", the "eternal lamps", or "Jove's shining lamps". The most beautiful effect of starlight in the whole poem is the simple mention of radiance

> Which sparkling on the silent waves did seem more bright.

The light on silent and therefore distant waves, if we may take the picture realistically, is another instance of the poet's spatial imagination. The moon to him is "silver", "faire", "fairest", "reigning in everlasting glory", dwelling in a "silver bower", or on an "ivory throne". He discriminates among her names, for Diana is only the terrestrial huntress, not the queen of night. The native word he uses often, but always in such simple, almost balladic, phrases as "the horned moon", "the chaunged moon", the moon in "foggie winter's night". He wakens her more frequently, if less hauntingly than does Shakspere, who, as Dr. Caroline Spurgeon has told us, mentions moonlight in his plays only eight times, though he has, of course, many references to the moon. In a splendid simile Spenser described Britomart as raising only a part of her helmet, and showing her face,

> As when faire Cynthia, in darksome night,
> Is in a noyous cloud envelopëd,
> Where she may find the substance thin and light,
> Breakes forth her silver beames, and her bright hed
> Discovers to the world discomfited.

On the whole, Wordsworth was literally correct as well as felicitous in his figure of Spenser's "clouded heaven", through which he moves with "the moon's soft pace".

The dominating conception of nocturnal skies is that of the "sable mantle". The epithets for night, strikingly varied, are far too numerous to catalogue. They emphasize both

atmospheric and emotional aspects, ranging in the latter category from "cheerless" to "noyous", "woeful", "baleful", "fearful", "dreadful", "endless", "everlasting", "eternal". The simplest metaphor for night, the "sable curtain", is as domestic as Shakspere's "blanket of the dark". Some phrases show no marked individuality; others swell into highest poetry, as in the elaborate conception of Night as aiding Duessa to carry the body of Sans Foy to be healed in the lower world. Two brown and two black steeds are joined to the chariot of Night, the pair themselves mismatched. The chromatic value of the iron chariot is enhanced by the linking of the brown steeds with the black and by the depicting of the "flecked bridles" as stained with "foaming tarre". It is idle to follow a critic into a differentiation of "brown" nights as contrasted with the darkest, since we have only to remember the light "duld with iron rust" in a passage already quoted.

In a mood quite different from that of Comus among his rout of monsters Spenser might have asked, "What has night to do with sleep?" Arthur, in his wearisome pursuit of the Fair Florimel, the actual flesh and blood creation, sought gentle sleep but it "envied him any rest." Then from his heart burst one of Spenser's unnamed "Complaints", in which by opposite suggestion he outdoes all his sonneteering compeers of the "care charmer sleep" variety, and negates all the gracious epithets of "Nature's soft nurse" later to be heaped up by the sleep-starved Macbeth. Though classical sources have been pointed out, Spenser is distinctive in Arthur's lament. First he generalizes—Night is the creator of "rayling tears", "troublous fears", dreadful visions in which

> The drearie image of sad death appears.

More specifically he lists the "light showing theft", "traitrous intent", "abhorred bloodshed", generalizing, however, in "fowle horror" and "hellish dreriment". Again, the sage and serious Spenser is individual: darkness for him by implied contrast blots out the Maker's handiwork and all human goodness:

> For day discovers all dishonest wayes,
> And sheweth each thing as it is indeed:
> The prayses of High God he faire displayes,

> And his large bounty rightly doth areed.
> Dayes dearest children be the blessëd seed.

Secondly, darkness is rather the destroyer of things good than a malevolent generatrix. His conception, thus modified as compared with classic adumbrations, is yet utterly different from that of a contemporary, Chapman, to whom "night was evidently in some sort the presence of God, in which the soul, freed from the urgent solicitations of sense was troubled like the pool of Bethesda." Lastly in Arthur's eager cry

> O when then will day turn to me againe
> And bring with him his long expected light?

we hear Spenser's own light-seeking spirit. The circumambient moon above the Thames and the "bricky towers" of the Temple seem chiefly forgotten when its rays peered into the loopholes of Kilcolman Castle or Spenser's house sheltered under it. One is tempted to believe that dwellers therein were forced to seek nightly shelter earlier in the dim valley of the Aubeg and the Bregoge than did denizens of the "walled town", which for all its "troubled cries" may have seemed more alluring as years widened the distance between them and Spenser. Certainly the spell of "longe nightes blake", as Chaucer would say, overmastered the impress of "the moon's soft face".

In conclusion we may infer that though Spenser both consciously and unconsciously remembered haunting passages of "olde bookes", to which he gave Chaucerian reverence, he reveals a first-hand interest in discerning the face of the sky; that he was capable of delicate and truthful observation; that in some of his finest imagery he is both independent and forceful; that he should not only retain his place among the "quattrocenti" but be admitted into the group of English landscape poets. On this ground, as well as a dozen others, he demands not only the scholar's vigilant eye, the rapt enjoyment of the poetic mind, but more abundant consideration by the general student of poetry, who may come to know him newly as an interpreter of not only old, joyous, as well as unhappy things, and battles long ago, but even of familiar, daily beauty.

THE IMPROMPTU MASK IN SHAKSPERE

(With especial reference to the stagery of *Romeo and Juliet,* I, iv-v)

By ALLISON GAW

AMONG the many problems that arise in connection with the Elizabethan staging of *Romeo and Juliet* one of the most interesting and least understood centres about the stage-direction, generally maltreated by editors, that stands at the opening of the climatic scene to Act I. This stage direction is unique in the Shaksperian canon. These are the surrounding circumstances:

In Act I, scene ii, Benvolio and Romeo have accidentally learned of the "old accustomed feast" to which the head of the house of Capulet is that night inviting a group of his friends; and, finding on the list of prospective guests Capulet's "fair niece Rosaline," Romeo's unreciprocating *inamorata,* Benvolio suggests to Romeo that together they go masked to the feast, given by a hostile house though it is, in order that Romeo may compare Rosaline with the other beauties there and thus be cured of his hopeless love. In pursuance of this design, according to the Folio stage-direction that begins the street scene, I, iv, *Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benuolio, with Fiue or sixe other Maskers, Torch-bearers.*[1] Romeo declares that although he is going with the party he has no intention of dancing.

> Give me a torch; I am not for this ambling;
> Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

His friends protest, but he insists.

> A torch for me . . .
> I'll be a candle-holder and look on.

After further conversation the scene shifts from the street to the main hall in the house of the Capulets. The transition between the two scenes is not indicated by an *exeunt* for the maskers, but by the remarkable stage-direction in question: *They* [the Maskers] *march about the stage, and seruingmen come forth with their Napkins.* Then follow six brief speeches between the servants, making it clear that they are

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[1] The readings of the second quarto (1599) are substantially identical. But *cf. post,* p. 160, *n.* 17.

there to remove trenchers, joint-stools, a "Court-cubbord" or sideboard, and the like, from the new scene, where the feast has just been finished. There follows the Folio stage-direction, *Enter all the guests and gentlewomen to the Maskers.* The host, old Capulet, addresses a speech of welcome to the Maskers and further supervises the preparation of the room for a dance.

> A hall, a hall! give room! and foot it, girls!
> More light, you knaves; and turn the tables up,
> And quench the fire,—the room is grown too hot.

Meanwhile Romeo, a spectator, as he had determined, has caught sight of Juliet as she dances. He asks a passing servant,

> What lady is that which doth enrich the hand
> Of yonder knight?

and soliloquizes on her beauty. Tybalt, of the house of Capulet, recognizes his voice as that of one of the hated Montagues, and would attack him. Being prevented by the host, the elder Capulet, Tybalt exits in wrath. Then ensues the first interview between Romeo and Juliet as she returns to her "place of stand," and the love story is inaugurated.

The stage-direction linking scenes iv and v, *They march about the Stage, and seruingmen come forth with their Napkins,* has frequently been commented upon as a curiosity. In three respects it is worthy of note. In the first place, the maskers' marching about on the stage is here a theatrical way of symbolizing a journey in a straight line to a fixed destination, a childlike device in the spirit of more primitive forms of dramatic art. But this aspect of the matter, the usual subject of comment upon it, is really a matter of minor consequence. The imagination easily accepts the convention, as is shown by modern experimentation with miracle plays, *The Little Clay Cart, The Yellow Jacket,* and the like. The more important aspect of the stage-direction has been generally overlooked, namely, that it constitutes a violation of the Elizabethan "Law of Re-Entry;"[2] and what makes it the more striking is, that to

[2] For this "law" see R. Prölss, *Von dem ältesten Drucken der Dramen Shakespeares,* 307*ff.*; C. M. Haines, "The Law of Re-Entry in Shakespeare," *Review of English Studies,* 1, 499 *ff.*; W. J. Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Workshop,* 1928.

carry it out, for the only time in the Shaksperian canon, servants are introduced, not to *set* a stage banquet, but to *remove* the remains of one that has been prepared, though not intended to serve any stage function other than removal! The so-called "Law of Re-Entry" was imposed on the Elizabethan playwright by the fact that on his non-pictorial stage he had to depend largely on the coöperative imagination of the audience in changing the supposed place of action of his successive scenes, and therefore, in order to prevent confusion, he was in general obliged to avoid having a character who is on the stage at the end of one scene appear at the beginning of the next—if the *locales* of the two scenes were not identical. In other words, usually the stage must have been completely cleared of the characters before a change of place became easily conceivable. Now, so far as I know, no attempt has ever been made to account for Shakspere's violation of the "law" in this case by keeping the maskers continuously on the stage over a scene change. Why did he do it? As a rule, any departure from stage custom on the part of a skilled dramatist is an attempt to solve some special difficulty confronting him at that point in the exercise of his art, and it has not been critically treated until the difficulty and its dramaturgic logic have been identified and the practical relation of the solution to the difficulty stated. And this extraordinary stage-direction in *Romeo and Juliet* is rooted in a difficulty that is not obvious on the surface—the true nature of which, indeed, Shakspere is assiduously concealing. What were the conditions here confronting him?

The Shaksperian stage was not rich in spectacular scenic effects, but it could do much to please the eye with costumes. For this purpose Shakspere was rather fond of the Elizabethan device, the impromptu "disguising" or mask, to use the latter word in the simple Elizabethan, not in the more elaborate Jacobean, sense. It will be helpful to get a generalized view of this device as Shakspere employs it. The custom was medieval English in origin but had been modified by contemporary Italian influence during the reign of Elizabeth's grandfather.[3] Usually it took the form of an

[3] E. K. Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, I, cap. V.

unexpected complimentary visit, by masked and brilliantly costumed intruders (or sometimes playfully by invited guests), at a formal entertainment, often following a banquet. A customary part of the ceremony was that the gay masqueraders should beg the ladies of the host's party to dance with them, a request with which the ladies usually complied. Maskings are found in six plays of the Shaksperian canon, namely, *Love's Labour's Lost, The Merchant of Venice, Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado About Nothing, Timon of Athens,* and *Henry VIII.* These span Shakspere's entire career and include three comedies, two tragedies, and a chronicle play. In four of these plays the dance itself, in each case following a feast, is actually presented on the stage. This occurs in *Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado, Timon,* and *Henry VIII.* In *Love's Labour's Lost,* where the device is an inorganic and more or less casual episode of wooing, the dance is evaded by the teasing coquetry of the ladies; and in *The Merchant of Venice,* in which the characters seem to have no special object in masking other than to find an outlet for youthful spirits, as soon as the merry atmosphere that serves as ironic background for the elopement of Jessica from the house of Shylock with her Christian lover Lorenzo has served its dramaturgic purpose, it is brought to an end by a reported change of wind and the hurried embarcation of some of the maskers for Portia's home at Belmont. In such masks naturally the visitors are normally men, but in *Timon of Athens,* I, ii, the pervasive masculinity of the play is relieved and the general adulation of the wealthy Timon underscored by the unusual introduction of a mask of women disguised as Amazons. In every case, except the poorly constructed *Love's Labour's Lost,* the device is introduced during Act I or Act II, that is, before the plot proper has reached a high degree of dramatic tension and while the spectators are still in the mood for mere spectacle.

In this device of the mask, in addition to the dancers themselves, certain supplementary figures may participate. Thus the maskers are sometimes presented to their host and his invited guests by the speaker of a prologue, apologetic or complimentary. Such an address by the boy Moth prefaces the mask of the Russians in *Love's Labour's Lost* and an

allegorical Cupid similarly foreruns the Amazons in *Timon.*

A second occasional accompaniment to the maskers, allied but extraneous, is a group of musicians. These might naturally be of the party of masqueraders, or they might be found as a part of the host's entertainment. Shylock, referring to their frequent presence in street processions of maskers, voices his hatred of

> the drum
> And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife.

In *Romeo and Juliet,* Q2, Benvolio ends scene iv with "Strike, drum;" but if we may attach significance to the absence of these words in the so-called "bad quarto," Q1, the drummer was a late addition to the group in that play.

Still another group of supplementary figures were the torch-bearers. These had their origin in the necessities of the street life of the time, where the belated traveler had best have his personal attendant to light his way; but in the mask they might be used artistically for costume and light effects, and at highest development they had spectacular group-pattern values, potentialities that we must believe would not be ignored when the mask was transferred to theatrical use. Naturally, in number the torch-bearers usually approximated, although they did not always exactly match, the number of dancers.[4] Minor figures as they are, they are used as plot machinery in *The Merchant of Venice,* where they supply the eloping Jessica with an effective disguise, as well as here in *Romeo and Juliet.* Their possibilities as a cover for intrigue will be evident.

This, then, is the social custom, common to Renaissance Italy and to Elizabethan England, that made it possible for Romeo and Benvolio, neither being formally invited guests to the Capulet's feast, nevertheless to attend without being guilty of an obvious offence against good taste. In fact, in both of Shakspere's sources, Arthur Brooke's poem, *The Tragical History of Romeo and Juliet* (1562), and William Painter's prose version (1566-67), Romeo finally unmasks and his escapade is apparently viewed by the ladies present, not as a social *faux pas,* but as a piece of charming audacity.[5]

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[4] I base this statement on the scanty figures for torch-bearers accumulated from the records by Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage,* I, 155 *ff.*

[5] Brooke, lines 169-194; Painter, *Palace of Pleasure,* ed. Jacobs, III, pp. 83-84.

In the play Shakspere softens the apparent impropriety of the hero still more by making him reluctant to go as one of the party and leaving him unrecognized save by Tybalt, by old Capulet (who promptly condones the matter with words of praise for the "virtuous and well-govern'd youth"), and by the Nurse, who learns his identity only when she has inquired at Juliet's request.

In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakspere inherited the hint for the decorative stress on the torches in the mask from his sources, both of which refer to the dance of Juliet with her partner, the "Knight," as a torch dance.[6] Nevertheless, Shakspere advances on his sources by making Romeo, in I, iv, insist on being merely a torch-bearer, not a dancer. To the student of plot mechanics it will be at once evident that the author is here aiming to disengage the hero somewhat from the stage activities of the group of dancers that have been necessary to motivate his admittance into the hostile house, and from which he must now be freed, so far as may be, in order to give him leisure to observe and later to woo Juliet. It has also the secondary advantage of harmonizing with his foreboding of disaster to arise from the evening's venture.

But this necessity for motivating Romeo's admission to the Capulets, without involving him in the dance itself, placed Shakspere in a rather difficult position as practical company playwright. He had to manage his mask machinery with a theatrical company of strictly limited size and under somewhat trying plot conditions. Dancing as a part of a masking visitation meant ladies to dance with; and, as in the Elizabethan theatrical company the ladies of the *dramatis personae* were impersonated by boys, the number of gentlemen masked dancers was necessarily, in theatrical practice, limited by the number of boys free, in the imagined stage situation, to act as women partners to them. This depended on the size and make-up of the company. The most complete picture that we have of an Elizabethan theatrical company of the decade 1590-1600 is contained in the *plat* of *2 Seven Deadly Sins,* which may, with unusual confidence, be dated to the single known performance of that arrange-

[6] Brooke, lines 245-246; Painter, *ed. cit.,* III, 85-86, following his French source, Boiastuau, who employs the phrase, "pour la faire danser au bal de la torche."

ment of the play, March 6, 1592.[7] This lists six boys in a company, Strange's Men, approximating a total of twenty, and there is reason to believe that this number of boys is characteristic also of Shakspere's company, which was mainly and closely derived from Strange's Men.[8] Now, in the dance scene at the Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet* Lady Montague would of course not be present; and the Nurse was socially ineligible. There are therefore four boys left, including Lady Capulet, who at the age of twenty-eight[9] is quite young enough for such enjoyment—the group being just sufficient for the typical square dance. There will therefore be four masked dancing gentlemen to match the four ladies. That this number was Shakspere's accepted stage usage in this regard is indicated by the fact that it is duplicated in each of the other three Shaksperian plays in which this spectacular device is recorded with sufficient explicitness to give us the necessary data. In *Love's Labour's Lost,* the masking gentlemen are the King, Biron, Dumain, and Longaville; in the *Merchant,* Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio; in *Much Ado,* Don Pedro, Benedick, Antonio, and Balthasar.[10] In accordance with this dance set-up,

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[7] For the date of this *plat* see A. Gaw, *Origin and Development of 1 Henry VI,* pp. 2-3, *n.* 2, pp. 27-28, *n.* 34.

[8] Whatever other objections may be raised to Professor Baldwin's treatment of the apprentices in his *Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company,* it is unquestionably true that any of Shakspere's plays could be produced with not more than six boys, except *A Midsummernight's Dream, Merry Wives of Windsor,* and possibly *Henry VIII.* The first two of these apparently originated under unusual conditions, the first as a part of an aristocratic wedding celebration, the second according to tradition by royal command, either supplying a valid basis for claims by the company for unusual assistance from choir boys. The third could easily meet the demand by doubling, lays more than usual stress upon spectacular elements, and is only partly by Shakspere. The number of adults in the company, by the date of *Romeo and Juliet,* must have increased over those listed in the *plat,* as in I, i, 88-110, there are at least fifteen adults present on the stage at once, with several of the adult male principals (Romeo, Paris, Mercutio, and Friar Laurence) not yet entered into the plot; but the number of boys seems to have remained practically stationary.

[9] See I, iii, 72-3.

[10] In *Henry* VIII only the King and the lad with whom he dances, Anne Boleyn, are specifically named. In *Timon* the rule of four male dancers probably, although not certainly, also holds, since there are in the play a quartette of men who illustrate the ingratitude of Timon's friends. The worst of these has, in I, ii, already received the name of Ventidius. The others are later named Lucius, Lucullus, and Sempronius. If the stage direction in I, ii, *The Lords . . . . each singles out an Amazon . . . .,* was intended to include the already named Ventidius, who is present, with the other three as yet unnamed "Lords," there are again four dancers. (Cf. *L.L.L.,* V, ii, 157, st. dir., where the King is certainly thus tacitly included among "The Lords.") But in *Timon,* in addition to this ambiguity, the matter is further complicated by the presence of a second hand and revision.

therefore, at I. iv. 1. of *Romeo and Juliet* Shakspere explicitly arranges for a party to consist of Romeo, Benvolio, Mercutio, and "five or six other Maskers, Torchbearers," that is, a minimum of eight, namely, four dancers and an equal number of accompanying figurants,[11] with, as sometimes occurs elsewhere in his directions for group entrances of minor actors, the addition, if feasible, of an extra supernumerary.[12] In other words, Shakspere, the practical showman, in such cases wants to make the best stage showing that the size of his company in a given season will permit, well knowing that various exigencies will alter the size of that company from time to time. Exact details concerning the matter would of course be settled for each successive revival during the immediately preceding rehearsals. In this case the extra man might serve in scene iv to suggest the possible speaker of a prologue (rejected by Mercutio) or to act as drummer, and in scene v would doubtless substitute in Romeo's original place as torch-bearer, either throughout

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11 The objection here will be raised that I have interpreted "five or Six Maskers, Torch-Bearers" as equivalent to "five or six Maskers and Torch-Bearers." The answer is that this is the only practicable interpretation. A total of eight or nine Maskers would call for eight or nine boy dancers to match them; and the addition of, say, four to eight torch-bearers would make the group, then totalling twenty to twenty-six males and "females," far too great for the size of the company, already strained by the smaller estimated number of twelve or thirteen.

12 For the group entrances Shakspere is usually either quite general or quite specific. Of these semi-specific directions, however, I have collected nineteen others from the First Folio and the early quartos of *Pericles* and *2 Henry IV*. These nineteen may be classified thus, according to the numbers involved. "One or two:" no cases. "Two or three:" eight cases (*All's Well,* IV, iii, 1; *Pericles,* II, iv, 16; *ibid,* I, v, 7; *2 Henry VI,* III, ii, 1; *ibid.,* IV, v, 1; *Henry VIII,* I, i, 97; *Timon,* IV, ii, 1; *Antony and Cleopatra,* II, vii, 1). "Three or four:" eight cases (*Romeo and Juliet,* I i, 80; *Merchant of Venice,* II, i, 1; *All's Well,* II, iii, 57; *2 Henry VI,* I, iii, 1; *2 Henry IV, V,* iv, 1; *Antony and Cleopatra,* IV, ii, 10; *Coriolanus,* IV, vi, 19; *ibid.,* V, vi, 8). "Four or five:" one case (*Hamlet,* II, ii, 439). "Five or six:" one case (*All's Well,* IV, i, 1). "Six or seven:" no case. "Seven or eight:" one case (*Coriolanus,* II, iii, 1). In each of these cases in which it is possible to trace accurately the requirements of the stage situation, the lowest number specified is always that of the practicable minimum. Thus the mock play in *Hamlet* requires at least four as specified, *i.e.,* impersonators of the Player King, the Player Queen, and Lucianus, and the speaker of the Prologue. An especially interesting case is that in *Coriolanus,* where all of the available citizens ("seven or eight") at first enter together, converse, and *exeunt.* Then they re-enter in three separate groups: (*a*) three, all speaking; (*b*) two, both speaking; and (*c*) three, only two speaking—totalling eight, of whom one can be omitted as indicated. In *All's Well,* in which there are three such cases, all calling for different numbers, the various entrances are consistent according to the functions of the characters in the different instances. In one case (*Pericles,* II, iv. 16) the extra has one single-line speech, arranged so that it can be excised without loss. Such is Shakspere's care as to stage necessities even when he appears indifferent.

or at the end of Juliet's dance, thus leaving Romeo wholly free to seek the acquaintance of the heroine.[13]

Now, this emphasis on the spectacular eight or nine in the generally uninvited[14] masking party made serious demands on the personnel of Shakspere's none-too-numerous supply of adult actors when he came to calculate on the number of *invited* guests required for the staging of the Capulets' feast. And here, as elsewhere, it is interesting to watch Shakspere cleverly create the illusion that he has a considerably larger number of actors than in fact he has.[15] In scene ii the audience has heard a list of nine men and fourteen or more women read as invited to the Capulets and has listened to the special personal invitation of Paris by old Capulet—a total of at least twenty-four formal guests. This number, taken alone, would approximate the number of actors in Shakspere's entire company, without allowing for all the other principals and subordinates needed in the play. If, in addition to the eight or nine uninvited maskers, we further exclude from the group of invited guests old Montague and Friar Laurence, both of

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[13] The facile handling of a bulky property by a leading man during a long, important scene is a serious minor problem of stage production, especially if the actor has at the same time to carry a visor. With the extra Masker present, the business here would apparently have to be managed in one of three ways: (1) Romeo might never take the torch in scene iv, his words to that effect being interpreted by the others present as a mere gesture of aristocratic condescension; (2) he might carry it over the scene change and during the opening of scene v, but be relieved of it by the supernumerary as soon as his attention is attracted to the heroine at the beginning of her dance (line 43); or (3) he might hold it while delivering his soliloquy concerning her and surrender it to his substitute at the end of the dance (line 95 or before) in order to follow her. Of these three methods the first is probably the neatest, and that it was the one Shakspere had in mind receives some corroboration from Juliet's words to the Nurse that Romeo "would not dance," since, posing as a torch-bearer, he would not have been expected to do so. In the absence of the extra Masker to serve as substitute, the alternative business would seem to be that the hero should bear the property throughout the active dancing and then hand it over to one of the Capulet servants for removal, in which case the other torches would probably be similarly disposed of at the same time. Modern stage methods, not troubled with maintaining the Elizabethan mask formula and with an *exeunt* between the two scenes, gave no aid in the problem.

[14] Mercutio was on the list of Capulet's guests but functions with the uninvited characters.

[15] Compare, for instance, in *Othello,* II, i, 51-58, 94-96, the off-stage cheering from "Venetians" but purporting to emanate from "ranks of people" on the shore at Cyprus, watching the arrival of Venetians in the harbor, when there are only Montano and three others in the company, all of them already on the stage, to represent the residents of Cyprus. Note also, in plays with large casts, the reported deaths of minor characters when their impersonators must have been already doubling in other parts.

whom for different reasons are impossible, and old Capulet himself, who was host, not guest, and also the five servants introduced in scenes i and ii, then Paris and Tybalt, the only important plot characters left, are practically the only ones who can represent the invited group. As a matter of fact, the male guests actually mentioned as appearing are Tybalt and a very subordinate actor of old men's parts who, to help fill the stage, is pressed into service as Second Old Capulet.[16] If now Shakspere follows the usual "Law of Re-Entry," which, for clarity, would compel the maskers to *exeunt* at the end of scene iv in order to permit scene change and then re-enter later in the following scene, the invited guests will thus be left alone on the stage for some moments, and their fewness, in comparison with the original list, is going to be painfully evident to the audience. This is definitely shown in the stage direction opening scene v in Q1, which reads: *Enter old Capulet and the Ladies,* omitting male guests entirely. To gain his spectacular effect, therefore, and at the same time to preserve the illusion of numbers by keeping his stage continually as full as possible, Shakspere, instead of making his numerous maskers enter to the few guests, determined to make the few guests enter to the numerous maskers; and for that purpose he was compelled to violate theatrical custom by keeping the maskers on the stage during the period of the scene change. Therefore the first half of the unique stage-direction, *They* [The maskers] *march about the Stage.* The group finally take a position on one side of the main platform. The unauthorized *exeunt* erroneously inserted here by Capell and Theobald and followed by Furness and the vast majority of editors, down to and including those of the present day, simply obscures and defeats Shakspere's stagecraft.

But the principle involved in the "Law of Re-Entry" could not be totally ignored. The change of *locale* must be made clearly evident to the audience; and since Mahomet could not vacate the stage to go to the mountain, the mountain must enter to Mahomet. This is taken care of by the

[16] The other two persons mentioned by Juliet and the Nurse at the end of the scene, "young Petruchio" and "the son and heir of old Tiberio," leave as a part of the group of Maskers and probably serve as the two dancers beside Benvolio and Mercutio. Despite the fact that Paris was probably also present, Shakspere, intent, as usual in his unamended stage-directions, upon the immediate business in hand, makes no reference in scene v to the fact.

second device, indicated in the second half of the same stage-direction, *and seruingmen come forth with their Napkins.* Three of the Capulets' men are thus made to enter as table servitors in order to arrange the stage for the dance, the stage becoming, as they do so, an interior in the Capulets' palace. Such a situation under medieval and Renaissance conditions required a clearing-away of the preceding feast rather than construction. Therefore the curtains of the alcove stage in the rear are opened, disclosing the disordered tables, the sideboards and other equipment that have been set for the servants to remove. Meanwhile, this stage business has been prepared for well in advance, and simultaneously the flight of time has been marked and verisimilitude has been increased for the whole sequence of scenes, by preceding allusions to the progress of the feast, to which, after the invitations have been sent out in I, ii, Lady Capulet has been summoned as hostess at the end of I, iii, and which Benvolio refers to as already over toward the conclusion of I, iv. The properties so prepared in the alcove for clearing at the opening of scene v must have been fairly extensive, for after the six-speech dialogue of the servants the clearing is still in progress when the host has reached the twelfth in line of his ensuing speech of welcome and he then devotes an additional three lines to expediting it, including a reference to the heat of the fire that deftly emphasizes the contrast between the interior and the street from which the maskers have just come. After this the dance that serves as gay background for the inauguration of the love story can proceed.

This triply peculiar stage-direction is therefore Shakspere's solution of a rather complex problem in art economics forced on him by very practical professional considerations. Crude as it appears, in its attempt to make *locale* move while characters remain prominently in sight, it has parallels in the moving point of view in literary description; in the cinema technique of photographing a speeding vehicle by a carema placed in another vehicle that moves abreast of the first; and, during the recent production of *The Green Pastures,* in the use of a double treadmill to picture the Israelites wandering in the desert, one treadmill for the actors to walk on yet remain stationary, while to

further suggest their advance the other bore scenery across the stage behind them in the opposite direction. The more important aspect of the matter, however, is the fascinating glimpse it gives us into the *arcana* of Shakspere's art as we catch him working as the creative artist must work—preconceiving his effect and then smoothly preparing for that effect as he approaches it—operating with art mechanics as the illusionist must, and then, with the magician's cunning, hoodwinking his unsuspecting audience as to his methods even while he unfolds the product of his subtle manipulation before their delighted eyes.

And the ultimate lesson of this passage, of especial value to modern editors and commentators, is this: *Trust Shakspere.* Seek the explanation of his methods rather than "correct" his texts to make him do what, in our ignorance of the inner secrets of his craftsmanship, we think he should have done. Shakspere knew his stage.[17]

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[17] There should be appended a comparative view of the three texts of matters germane to this paper. The Q2 text (1599), through Q3 basic to F1, here seems clearly an elaboration of that represented by Q1. The stage direction that opens scene iv in Q1, *Enter Maskers with Romeo and a Page,* omits all mention of torch-bearers, although it insists expressly on a supplementary Page, of no apparent use unless to serve as Romeo's substitute as torch-bearer in scene v. In opening scene v the direction, *They march about the Stage, and Seruingmen come forth with their Napkins,* does not appear in Q1 although (as in Q2 and F1) the Maskers remain continuously upon the stage through the two scenes, as is obvious from old Capulet's addressing them, *Welcome Gentlemen, welcome Gentlemen,* in the opening line of the new scene after he has entered with the *Ladies.* Q2 records no entrance of the servants for clearing away the banquet, and their six speeches do not appear; and this omission is emphasized by the fact that old Capulet's opening speech is six lines shorter, as if less time needed to be filled up during the stage clearing. Some clearing is still called for, however, by his order to *turn these tables up,* which appears in all texts. Curiously, in Q2, after the direction, *Enter march,* etc., there stands the unmistakably erroneous direction, *Enter Romeo,* who is already upon the stage, having had the last Maskers' speech preceding except for Benvolio's two words, *Strike drum.* That this entrance was not the stage practice of the company is shown by the fact that F1 corrects the direction to *Enter Servant,* as the leading servant has the first speech-heading following, both in Q2 and in F1.

SHAKSPERE'S CONCEPTION OF THE CLERGY*

By MAX HUHNER, M.D.

IN his discussion of Friar Laurence, Coleridge comments on the fact that the depiction of the clergy by Shakspere was far superior to that of his contemporaries. He says:

> In Beaumont and Fletcher priests are represented as a vulgar mockery, and, as in others of their dramatic personages, the errors of a few are mistaken for the demeanor of the many; but in Shakespeare they always carry with them our love and respect. He made no injurious abstracts; he took no copies from the worst parts of our nature; and, like the rest, his characters of priests are truly drawn from the general body.

While I do not wish to compare Shakspere's delineation of the clergy with that of his contemporaries, and am willing to admit that *his* delineation is far superior to that of other writers of his time, I cannot agree with the great Shaksperian critic that they always "carry with them our love and respect", and I hope, for the reputation of the clergy of his time, that Shakspere's portrayals are *not* "truly drawn from the general body."

As a matter of fact, Shakspere's delineation of the clergy is extremely biased, and throughout his works he evinces a dislike for the cloth which leads him to unfair generalizations.

It must be remembered that Shakspere was a wonderful student of human nature, far superior to any of his contemporaries. It is for *this* reason that his presentation of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* is a great improvement on Marlowe's *Jew of Malta,* but no one would claim on that account that Shakspere's depiction of the Jew is a credit to the Jewish race or represents the average Jew.

And so it is with Shakspere's delineation of the priesthood. I shall attempt to show in the present essay that the priests in Shakspere's plays are, with very few exceptions, anything but ideal. They are portrayed as great generals, as great diplomats, but hardly ever as good or spiritual. Quite the contrary; wherever he presents us with a priest whose character is at all important, he is depicted as a schemer and a trouble maker.

In *King John,* for instance, Cardinal Pandulph not only starts anew the war between France and England (which

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might be excusable in view of King John's attitude towards the Pope), but also plays fast and loose with *both* parties at the same time. In *Richard II* the clergy is in the thick of the fight, likewise scheming on both sides, but Shakspere gives us no data by which we can judge which side was right. In *Henry IV* the priests initiate a rebellion against the king, but they never work in the interests of peace. In *Henry VI* Cardinal Beaufort (Winchester) is haughty, ambitious, unscrupulous, not even stopping at murder to gain his private ends.[1]

In *Henry V,* particularly, the priest whom Shakspere drew is more a man of war than of peace. In the opening scene of the play, Shakspere emphasizes the fact that the clergy were responsible for the war between England and France; we are told that their object in starting the war was not from any patriotic motive, but solely to save the revenue of the Church, which had been threatened by a bill passed against them in the reign of Henry IV. (See I, i, 1-23, 69-89; also I, ii, 9-165.)

All this might possibly be excusable were there a *patriotic* motive back of it, but the fact, brought out so unequivocally by Shakspere, that the entire scheme was purely *selfish* in character, robs it of whatever little excuse might otherwise exist. It should also be noted that in all his arguments the Archbishop was ably seconded by the Bishop of Ely.

In *Henry VIII* we find the clergy, with the exception of Cranmer, depicted as unscrupulous and ambitious. The character of Wolsey is so well known as to need mention only, but the rest of the clergy portrayed in *Henry VIII* are shown to be of the same type. Well might Cranmer upbraid his enemy, the Bishop of Winchester, with the words:

> love and meekness, lord,
> Become a churchman better than ambition.

It might be objected, however, that Shakspere could not help himself in these delineations, because, historically, the

[1] I am aware of course that both *Henry VI* and *Henry VIII* are classed among the doubtful plays of Shakspere, and that only parts of these plays were written by him. Some authorities even hold that these plays were entirely written by some contemporary and that Shakspere merely edited them or wrote certain scenes. But even were this proved, it would nevertheless indicate that Shakspere was at least in sympathy with the general portrayal of the main characters.

clergymen he portrayed were just as he described them. But, surely, no writer, except one who has a strong dislike for the clergy, would go out of his way, as Shakspere so often does, to point their bad qualities. A devout admirer of the clergy would have been tempted to change history, so as not to bring out their failings too prominently. We know, too, that in his dramas Shakspere *never hesitated to change English history* when it suited his purpose. But, as has already been pointed out, Shakspere does just the reverse. The miserable wrangling between the members of the clergy in *Henry VIII* (I do not refer to Wolsey but to the other priests) could easily have been omitted from the play entirely (it has no important bearing on the general plot of the drama), but Shakspere deliberately inserted it to present the clergy in an evil light. So, too, the entire first scene in *Henry V* could have been omitted, without subtracting one iota from the general plan of the play; it was certainly not necessary to bring out so prominently the fact that the war between England and France was plotted by the clergy merely to safeguard some of their own revenues.

May I therefore now call attention to the *subconscious* prejudice against the clergy which seems to have been in the very make-up of Shakspere's character? Time after time, when it has absolutely nothing to do with the subject under consideration, Shakspere goes out of his way to denounce them. Let me cite but a few prominent examples.

In *Hamlet* (I, iii, 3), when Laertes cautions Ophelia concerning her relations with Hamlet, the chaste and innocent Ophelia replies:

> But, good my brother,
> Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
> Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
> Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
> And recks not his own rede.

It would not be remarkable if a Prince (Humphrey), the brother and son of a king, descanted on the pride of the priest, nor would it surprise us to find such wicked characters as Richard III or King John casting slurs upon their honesty and virtue, but why should a chaste, religious, and innocent person like Ophelia make any such remark? She could certainly have given the same rebuff to her brother,

without bringing in her criticism of the clergy at all, by saying:

> But, good my brother,
> Do not show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
> Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
> You tread the primrose path of dalliance,
> And reck not your own rede.

The effect of this would have been exactly the same; but Shakspere actually went out of his way to drag in a reproach to the clergy.

At the funeral of Ophelia, Laertes says:

> I tell thee, churlish priest,
> A ministering angel shall my sister be,
> When thou liest howling.

In *Twelfth Night* (IV, ii, 2) the Clown, asked to disguise himself as a curate by putting on a clerical gown, remarks:

> Well, I'll put it on, and I will dissemble myself in't; and I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a gown

Nor is Shakspere's contempt confined only to the Christian clergy. It includes the clergy of other denominations as well. It was not necessary to emphasize in *Troilus and Cressida* that the Trojan traitor in the Greek camp was a priest. In *Cymbeline* (IV, ii), Guiderius, although in deep sorrow at the supposed death of Imogen, says,

> For notes of sorrow out of tune are worse
> Than priests and fanes that lie.

In *Julius Caesar* Shakspere betrays his subconscious contempt for the clergy in general. When Cassius (II, i) suggests that the conspirators should swear to their resolutions, Brutus indignantly rejects the proposal with the words:

> No, not an oath: * * *
> What need we any spur, but our own cause,
> To prick us to redress? what other bond
> Than secret Romans, that have spoke the word,
> And will not palter? and what other oath
> Than honesty to honesty engaged,
> That this shall be, or we will fall for it?
> Swear priests, and cowards, and men cautelous,
> Old feeble carrions, and such suffering souls
> That welcome wrongs; *etc.*

But to return to the clergy of later days. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Shakspere not only depicts the Welsh parson as a ludicrous person, but also has him make a most

obscene remark (which could well have been omitted, or put in the mouth of some other character). He also puts into Ford's mouth the following:

> I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself; etc.

According to the psychology of Freud and his school, it is *not* what a person says, when under observation or in public, that denotes his true character, but rather what he says when caught off guard, his so-called "slips" which give us the cue to his real uncensored mind. Had Shakspere portrayed one of his heroes making a violent denunciation of religion or of the clergy, we could not, on that account, conclude that such sentiments belonged to Shakspere himself. We could only argue, in that case, that Shakspere wanted to introduce a thoroughly anti-religious or anti-clerical character. But the quotations given above were not uttered by anti-religious or anti-clerical personages. Quite the contrary. Ophelia was a religious individual; Laertes, in spite of his many failings, was not at all irreligious, but was sincerely insistent that his sister should have all the religious rites of the Church. Neither were Guiderius, Brutus or the Clown irreligious.

It must here be emphasized that, although Shakspere was the greatest master in the portrayal of human nature, he was not absolutely perfect, and made many obvious errors in that regard. From a purely *dramatic* point of view, it was certainly a mistake to put the anti-clerical remarks above quoted into the mouths of the personages mentioned.[2]

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[2] A curiosity may be found in the works of the great German poet Goethe, and here also, the mistakes bring out the poet's *own* sentiments. In his *Faust,* for instance, we find the following sarcastic slur on the greed of the Church:

> The Church a splendid stomach has,
> Can stand whatever comes to pass;
> Gulp'd down whole states without a question,
> Yet never suffered indigestion.

Now, had these words been uttered by Mephisto, they would not have indicated Goethe's own sentiments, as the devil, being the enemy of the Church, would naturally be apt to make such a remark. The same would be the case had Faust uttered them, as he was under the devil's influence at the time. But Goethe puts the foregoing sentiment into the mouth of a Catholic Priest, when addressing two devout Catholic women. Note the incident. The mother of Marguerite, having caught a glimpse of the jewels anonymously presented to her daughter, sends for a priest to ascertain whether her daughter may in good conscience retain them, whereupon the priest promptly confiscates the jewels on behalf of the church, with the above explanation. From a purely dramatic point of view, it seems to be a serious mistake to ascribe such an unethical sentiment to a priest, but, according to the Freudian theory, it pointedly brings out Goethe's own subconscious views and prejudices.

These are the occasions when Shakspere is found off his guard; they may be considered his "slips" in which he reveals to us his *own subconscious* dislike of the clergy. I must crave indulgence for repeating this argument so often, but I emphasize it purposely because it *is* so important in bringing out this peculiarity in the great master's own make-up, and because it has never been emphasized before by any of the numerous Shaksperian scholars. In a future essay of mine, entitled "Shakspere's Character as Revealed by His Plays," I shall go more deeply into this matter, and shall show, by numerous quotations, how we may definitely determine the sort of man Shakspere himself was from a careful study of his works, especially his mistakes.

As a matter of fact, with the possible exception of Cranmer, Shakspere has never presented an ideal priest, though many of his laymen are clothed with all the noble qualities which an ideal cleric should possess.

The character of Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet* is frequently cited as showing Shakspere's conception of a good and noble priest, but a careful study of this character will show it to be no exception to the rule.

Shakspere was certainly a great student of human nature and understood human psychology almost to perfection. He knew that "all the world loves a lover", and that in doing so, one often overlooks many important shortcomings. In *Romeo and Juliet* we are intensely interested in the passionate lovers, irrespective of the means employed. Shakspere fully understood this pyschological trait in our make-up and used it on more than one occasion. Let me illustrate this point by calling attention to his description of another love affair, namely, that between Jessica and Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice.*

Here also the beautiful description of their love arouses our profound sympathy, and we therefore lose sight of the fact that Jessica was really a most vile, unnatural and almost inhuman individual. She deliberately steals from her old father in the most shameful manner, and squanders this stolen property without any compunction or remorse. She leaves her father a prey to his enemies without the slightest sign of compassion. Whatever opinion we may have of

Shylock, we must admit that whatever he possessed he had at least acquired within the law. Even if, according to strict ethics, he had no moral title to his wealth, there was certainly no excuse for his daughter and her lover and their accomplices to steal it from him. She stole even her father's engagement ring, held sacred by him as a keepsake from her own mother, and then traded it off for a monkey. But our sympathy is so taken up with the love of Jessica and Lorenzo that, unless we analyze the incidents closely, we entirely lose sight of and overlook their baser attributes.

And so it is with Romeo and Juliet. We not only sympathize with the intense love between them, but we also sympathize with anyone who helps them. This accounts for our sympathy, our love and respect for Friar Laurence. But let us analyze the situation.

After all, Romeo had been guilty of a serious breach of his country's laws. True, he had been provoked to the utmost; but what he had done was murder, even according to the crude laws of his time and country. Anyone else committing the crime, after the Prince's express warning, would certainly have been put to death, but the Prince, taking into account the extreme provocation, as well as Romeo's high standing in the community, commuted the punishment to banishment. As a matter of fact, the Prince had declared, in one of the earlier scenes, that mere disturbance of the peace by either faction would result in capital punishment. No one could therefore object to the punishment meted out to Romeo, and even Friar Laurence tells him that he was extremely lucky to get off so easily.

Despite all this, we find Friar Laurence, a churchman, a priest, one who ought to be a stern upholder of the laws of his country, not only concealing Romeo after he had been justly banished, but even deliberately advising him to call on Juliet that very night, and cautioning him to be gone before morning. Such conduct on the friar's part was certainly contrary to law, and amounted to aiding and abetting a criminal to break the law. He next enters into a clumsy scheme with Juliet, and deliberately sends for Romeo to come back to Verona, another breach of his country's laws when he knew that Romeo had been legally and rightfully banished.

But our sympathy goes out to Friar Laurence and we overlook the criminal part of his action merely because we are so deeply interested in the love between Romeo and Juliet. We subconsciously pardon any act, no matter how wrong, which would help the lovers. But if we look at the affair calmly and impartially, we must certainly admit that the conduct of the Friar was not what we ought to expect from an ideal priest.

In *Much Ado About Nothing* the case of Friar Francis is very similar to the above. Hero, having been wrongly accused at her wedding ceremony, faints away, and is believed to be dead by the princes who accused her. Friar Francis, having faith in her innocence, thereupon advises her father and friends as follows:

> Pause awhile,
> And let my counsel sway you in this case;
> Your daughter here the princes left for dead:
> Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
> And publish it that she is dead indeed;
> Maintain a mourning ostentation,
> And on your family's old monument
> Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
> That appertain unto a burial, *etc.*

Here again our sympathy for the unfortunate Hero completely overshadows the defect in the dramatic portrayal. Our sympathy extends not only to Hero, but also to the priest who, by this procedure, finally succeeds in bringing the play to a happy close.

But let us once again carefully analyze the situation. As in the case of Friar Laurence, the scheme devised by the cleric had a good purpose. Had it been devised by a friend of the heroine, there would have been nothing incongruous about it. In *A Winter's Tale* Shakspere presents a very similar plot, but in that case the scheme emanates from a woman, not from a priest. After all, however, in view of the high standard of the Church, is it right or even natural that a priest should devise a lying scheme which has for its object not only the deception of the parties most interested, but which at the same time makes a mockery of one of the Church's most sacred functions and celebrates funeral rites in all solemnity in connection with a person who is not dead,

and does this with all the ostentation which only the rich and the influential can compass?

If we consider this aspect of Shakspere's conception of the clergy, we might perhaps imagine Shakspere to have been a very irreligious man. But such was certainly not the case. Only a person with deep religious feeling could have composed the prayer of the King in *Hamlet,* or the prayers and meditations found in *Henry V* and in other plays.

I do not wish to imply that the cardinals portrayed in *Henry V* or some of the other plays were really *wicked* men. I only call attention to the fact that Shakspere depicts them as diplomats rather than as priests, and that, with the possible exception of Cranmer, never presents any ideal or really humble and virtuous cleric. A priest in Shakspere is generally portrayed as a schemer.

That Shakspere had a very clear conception of what an *ideal* priest should be is beautifully set forth in the utterances of both Westmoreland and Prince John when addressing the rebel Archbishop in the *Second part of Henry IV* (IV, i, ii):

> . . . . . You, Lord archbishop,
> Whose see is by a civil peace maintain'd,
> Whose beard the silver hand of peace hath touch'd;
> Whose learning and good letters peace hath tutor'd;
> Whose white investments figure innocence,
> The dove and very blessëd spirit of peace,—
> Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself
> Out of the speech of peace, that bears such grace,
> Into the harsh and boist'rous tongue of war;
> Turning your books to greaves, your ink to blood,
> Your pens to lances, and your tongue divine
> To a loud trumpet and a point of war?
>
> * * *
>
> My Lord of York, it better show'd with you,
> When that your flock, assembled by the bell,
> Encircled you to hear with reverence
> Your exposition on the holy text,
> Than now to see you here an iron man,
> Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum,
> Turning the word to sword and life to death.
>
> * * *
>
> It is even so. Who hath not heard it spoken,
> How deep you were within the books of God?

> To us the speaker in his parliament;
> To us th' imagin'd voice of God himself:
> The very opener and intelligencer
> Between the grace, the sanctities, of heaven
> And our dull workings.

Lest it be argued, however, that Shakspere's biased portrayal of the clergy was due to the anti-Catholic feeling which prevailed in England in his day, it may be pointed out that both in *Henry V* and in *Henry VI* he portrays noble and ideal Catholic kings, and that in *Henry VIII* he gives us Queen Katherine, the devout Catholic queen, as a noble, forgiving and idealistic character. We must therefore conclude, it seems to me, that Shakspere's prejudice appertained to the clergy generally and entirely irrespective of any religious denomination.

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THE MAN SHAKESPEARE*

By GEORGE L. KITTREDGE

WHEN we do honor to a friend's birthday, we think of the man whom we commemorate rather, I suppose, in his personal aspect than with regard to his actions or achievements. Inevitably, then, our thoughts are busied today with the eternally vexed and vexing question: What was Shakspeare the man? What were the intimate and personal actions and events that, if we knew them, would inform and constitute his biography—his biography, that is to say, in the intensely modern signification of the word.

As for externals, we are well enough provided. Shakespeare's professional and literary career is an open book. In this regard we have many more facts—bare facts—about him than about most literary men of his time, unless such men were (like Bacon) personages of importance in public life. But these bare bones, when assembled and duly articulated, make up a skeleton—not a living and breathing human creature. The mystery remains. What of heredity? That tells us nothing in this instance.

But why should it tell us anything? Talents may perhaps be inherited—certainly they may be acquired. It is within our own election whether we learn to read without stumbling, to write a legible hand, to skate, to swim, to sail a boat, to drive a car. But what a stupendous thing our ancestry is! Most of us can trace it for a dozen or fifteen generations. But what is that in comparison with the lapse of æons since men were leaping from branch to branch in their arboreal condition, or just learning to walk on their hind legs? There are families of lawyers, to be sure, and families of doctors, and families of divines. But you all know eminent lawyers, doctors, and divines who come from a long line of farmers and tradesmen—with no representatives of law or medicine or theology in their ascertainable pedigree. Sometimes, indeed, the overturn is so amazing that we are tempted to adopt Slender's oracle: "All his successors gone before him and all his ancestors that come after him."

I will accept the challenge to account for Shakespeare on the ground of ancestry and childhood associations in

* This address was broadcast on April 23d under the auspices of The Shakespeare Association of America.

Stratford when my challenger will in like manner account for Chaucer and Keats and Shelley, for Raphael and Michelangelo, for Bacon and Newton, for Cicero and Virgil and Horace, for Julius Caesar and Napoleon. The ancients were wise when they talked of the *divine afflatus*. "The wind bloweth where it listeth—so is every one that is born of the spirit." Who can tell where the lightning will strike? Millions of boys for thousands of years had been flying kites—but does that account for Ben Franklin? Genius is an open book to the Almighty—and to him alone. To us it is, and always must be, a splendid accident.

Can we read the man in his works? The temptation has proved irresistible. Arrange the plays in order of time and infer from them the biography of Shakespeare's soul; and, from the biography of his soul, infer events and experiences that (in the usual course of human life) would account for the moods that the several dramas seem to designate or illustrate or portray. All this has been done and we have, in volume after volume, the autobiographical outcome—vivid in its picturesqueness and intense in its psychological thrill. In particular, there has been inferred and constructed a period in which Shakespeare was at odds with the world about him and at odds with himself; and in that period (with *Troilus and Cressida* as our guide-book) we are bidden to imagine the existence of some woman, fair, fascinating, and false—lawlessly worshipped and bitterly repudiated.

But this is novel-writing, not biography.

We are dealing with the supreme dramatist—with that extraordinary man who (more than any other of whom the world holds record) could put himself in the place of any human being (male or female) in any imaginable situation and any imaginable mood—and then could make that person utter his or her thoughts and feelings and emotions and passions as he or she would utter them if endowed with superhuman power of expression.

Baffled in their attempts to discover the undiscoverable, to isolate that which pervades and vivifies the whole but eludes analysis and defies extraction—puzzled and thwarted by a personality that is present and active as truly in Iago

and Macbeth and Claudius as in Hamlet and Prospero and Ulysses, and that speaks and moves in Hotspur and Falstaff alike—inquisitive spirits have retired from their assaults upon the dramas of Shakespeare, and fallen furiously, in unabashed discomfiture, upon the defenceless Sonnets. Defenceless indeed! for what lies so bare of protection and concealment as a poor little lyric poem in which, both from its very nature and from the conventions that attend it, the author must appear to "unlock his heart"?

A sonnet (if it would not fail of its purpose, would not falsify the end for which it comes into being) must seem to be veracious and actual; it must seem to express authentic emotion, and (most pernicious of qualities!) it must speak in the first person. In a word, a sonnet must be either patently artificial, and then it is *bad*—or *good,* and then it sounds like autobiography. There is no escape; a good sonnet appears to be a confession. These are terms from which not even the supreme genius can be exempt. He must either refrain, or run the risk of a literal (that is, a personal) interpretation. It follows, then, that the testimony of the sonnets must ever remain ambiguous. Nothing can prove them autobiographical except the discovery of outside evidence that they accord with facts of the poet's life; and no such evidence is forthcoming.

Here is no chance to appeal to the twice-battered catchword "sincerity." Are not Hamlet's soliloquies sincere? and Iago's cynical revelations of his code? and Macbeth's poetic imaginings that visualize to the edge of delirium? And what of Claudius when he tries to pray, and of Dame Quickly when she recites the oath sworn upon the parcel-gilt goblet? Each of these speeches is in equal measure the outbreak of the person's character: all are sincere, then; and all, of course, are in the first person. Yet the I is nowhere William Shakespeare. What warrant, then, have we for assuming other than a dramatic sincerity in the sonnets, unless we are willing to argue in the most vicious of circles? unless we are abject enough to substitute deliberately the yearnings of our own sentimental curiosity for the operations of reason and conscience?

Let us therefore be humble. We may fancy what we choose to fancy, for that is our prerogative. But we have

no right to dignify our idle reveries with the name of biographic fact.

Shakespeare is not Hamlet—neither is he Falstaff or Iago or Edmund or Lear or Touchstone. So much we know. And the lesson that follows logically should be easy to learn. Perhaps Shakespeare is the man or the men of the sonnets—perhaps he is not. Assertion either way is equally fallacious, equally presuming. Nor would knowledge either way profit us if we could obtain it. For what is any one of us that he should think to read the riddle of another's personality? Here, as so often, the great assertor of human nature speaks a truth through the lips of a bad man. "By heaven!" cries Othello—baffled as we are baffled—"by heaven, I'll know thy thoughts!" And mark Iago's answer:

> "You cannot, if my heart were in your hand—
> Nor shall not whilst 'tis in my custody!"

A PRINCE OF SHREDS AND PATCHES

By R. W. BABCOCK

THIS paper will deal with Professor J. Dover Wilson's Hamlet, a prince of shreds and patches, as he is portrayed in *What Happens in "Hamlet",* Mr. Wilson's latest book.

I should say at the beginning that I am not concerned with Mr. Wilson's textual animadversions on *Hamlet.* I have not yet completely swallowed the idea of a compositor of Q2, who, a plodder, is being rushed to death for a reason Mr. Wilson cannot state, who is a Welshman by spelling and a Freshman in punctuation (*i.e.,* just beginning in *Hamlet* to learn how to punctuate): all these items to account for the amazing number of misprints in Q2, including an astonishing omission of a block of some thirteen lines at one swoop. The play in this version (and the Folio, too, for that matter) is far too long for acting, as Hart, Schücking, and Spencer have all pointed out, but Mr. Wilson cannot say whether it was abridged or not. The omissions of the compositor, the inadequacy of stage directions, the weird spelling, the dubious punctuation, the mixup of speech prefixes—all these point to the rather speculative value of Q2. These flaws, combined with the tremendous length of this version, impel me to a very bold suggestion, which I hope to develop elsewhere. Mr. Wilson himself admits there may have been an earlier Shaksperian version. De Groot, Creizenach, Robertson, Waldock and Bradby all posit some intermediate version (not necessarily Q1) between the *Ur-Hamlet* and Q2. Archer has called Shakspere's *Hamlet* chaos. Hence I propose that the original Shaksperian *Hamlet* was a two-part play (Robertson and De Groot have both gone this far on the Kyd play) and that Q 2 is some sort of version or perversion of this two-part play. In fact, if the play was given in two parts on two successive days, and if one considers the chaotic aspects of Q2 noted above, one might even declare that Q2 is a *pirated* version of this two-part play, by a memorizer,[1] who

[1] For this idea in general I am indebted to Mr. Leo Kirschbaum of the University of Michigan.

would naturally omit the items omitted or blurred above. At any rate, I should say that neither Q2 nor F1 is anywhere near what Shakspere originally wrote. But I lack the boldness to go any further with this now: it is irrelevant, anyway, at the moment.

I

The Romantic Heresy of Hamlet is a long, long story. It began with Francis Gentleman in 1770, George Steevens (1773), William Richardson (1774) Henry Mackenzie (1780), and other 18th-century romanticists, flowered in Coleridge, Hazlitt and Lamb, flourished through the whole 19th century, and has been watered repeatedly in the 20th: notably by A. C. Bradley, G. Santayana, A. Clutton-Brock, E. K. Chambers, A. Nicoll, G. F. Bradby, L. Gillet, J. A. Chapman, B. R. Conrad, H. Walley, G. W. Knight, T. S. Eliot, H. Cummings, J. Q. Adams, and most recently (in 1936) J. M. Murry. Not all these names are of equal importance, but it is obvious that there are plenty of hands eager to keep the flower alive. Mr. Wilson is also interested in this flower—with his right hand—but his left hand carries a small, fine spade (of historical criticism). And sometimes his hands get a bit criss-crossed. Let us turn to *What Happens in 'Hamlet'*.

Mr. Wilson starts right off in his Preface praising A. C. Bradley and J. Q. Adams: that places him rather definitely at the beginning. When he gets into the book, he is tremendously worried by the antic disposition, which he says Hamlet drifted into as a sort of steam-exhaust valve (Wilson says he will have nothing to do with sources). By p. 217 this antic disposition has become "some kind of mental disorder", and Wilson takes his place beside Bradley and Clutton-Brock. Hamlet's melancholy is apparently a combination of clothes-melancholy and ambition-melancholy, and this melancholy is definitely linked with procrastination on p. 224 (Miss Amy Louise Reed or E. E. Stoll could both have taught him the foolishness of this idea). "The procrastination and the melancholy are all of a piece", declares Mr. Wilson on p. 226; and he refuses flatly to have anything to do with Elizabethan psychology. By p. 265 he supplemented this development with Miss Spurgeon's

imagery of frustration and disease, and Hamlet's "melancholic paralysis" is now complete. Yet a most startling offshoot of Mr. Wilson's solution of the *Hamlet* problem is the insistence on mystery itself as the heart of the problem. Mr. J. M. Robertson will turn over in his grave, for he recently evolved the same idea, and I doubt whether he ever had much love for Mr. Wilson. The latter's tremendous deference to Mr. Bradley is amusing also in the light of his praise for Mr. Waldock and Miss Bradbrook, both of whom have relegated Bradley to the limbo of antiquated critics. But, to conclude, Mr. Wilson's belief in "the weakness of Hamlet's character" is obvious. So much for his right hand.

His left hand takes turns reaching for the throats of historical critics (particularly Mr. Stoll) who have anticipated him and then using the precise methods of these critics to prove his own points—all of which, in light of the canons of criticism Mr. Wilson himself peremptorily promulgated in volume II of his *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'*, leads one to resurrect some of the canons of criticism applied by one Thomas Edwards to Editor William Warburton in the middle of the 18th Century:

> *Canon XVII.* It will be necessary for the professed critic to have by him a good number of pedantic and abusive expressions, to throw about upon proper occasions.

For example, Mr. Wilson on p. 250: "And that he [the ghost] should thus speak of Hamlet's 'almost blunted purpose' annihilates the idea, seriously entertained in certain quarters [with a contemptuous reference to Stoll], that the procrastination is a modern invention." Aside from the fact that Mr. Stoll's idea is *not* by any means annihilated, the remark is a contemptible slur, and of a piece with Mr. Wilson's previous fling at Stoll in his edition of *Hamlet,* in the galley proof of which the present writer saw, "Yet his [Mr. Stoll's] thesis is the veriest moonshine that ever bemused a scholar's brain" (which has been toned down somewhat now on p. lx of the finally printed version, though the same page contains an equally vicious slur at the top of it). The amusing thing is that the ridiculous statement Mr. Wilson makes on p. 204 (that "Shakespeare never furnishes an explanation for Hamlet's inaction" [*i.e.,* after the mouse-

trap]) has been twice answered by Mr. Stoll: Hamlet is "in custody"; he is "under guard". But Mr. Wilson will have none of Mr. Stoll, though he never hesitates to use that critic's methods. Which recalls us to Mr. Edwards'

> *Canon XIX.* He may use the very same reasons for confirming his own observations, which he has disallowed in his adversary.

Both in his edition of *Hamlet* and in his *What Happens in 'Hamlet'* Mr. Wilson damns historical critics up and down the boards. For example, on p. 15 of the latter, "The historical critics have troubled to wrestle with the text even less than the psychological critics". But Mr. Wilson has a one-track mind on historical criticism: the only type he seems to recognize is source study—"This objection offers a pretty illustration of the dangers of the 'historical' method, that is of explaining situations in Shakespeare by reference to his hypothetical sources" (p. liv of the edition). He cannot even distinguish between sceptical criticism and historical criticism, for he calls Bradby's "discovery" of two Horatios a particularly favourable example of the "historical method" (p. 236). But it is *not* the historical method—it is pure, sceptical criticism, and so it never occurs to Mr. Wilson that Stoll may be both a sceptic and an historical critic. To return, however, there are certainly more types of historical study than merely source study: *e.g.* (1) comparative, (2) study of the age's customs and beliefs, (3) stage history (including Shakspere's audience), (4) linguistic study, (5) history of the period; and Mr. Wilson uses *all* of them, including, incidentally, source study. He spent some time in his edition showing an Italianate source of Claudius; he devotes a whole chapter of *What Happens* to the Elizabethan attitude toward ghosts, in the course of which he involves the attitude of the audience; he mentions Burbage's possible additions to his part; he explains the duel in Elizabethan terms; he declares Essex is the original of Hamlet; he dips into Elizabethan wagers and incest; he even tries comparative study with Fletcher. None of these points is really new, as I shall show below, but Mr. Wilson certainly lets his left hand spade into solid historical earth, at intervals between its besmirched slaps at historical critics who got ahead of him. All in all, this is a very peculiar picture to look upon.

Such startling evidences of illogicality in Mr. Wilson appear often throughout the book. They partake a little of Mr. Edwards'

> *Canon XVI.* He may contradict himself for the sake of shewing his critical skill on both sides of the question.

At the close of his book Mr. Wilson uses the German play to prove a point, whereas at the beginning of the book he poured ridicule upon that work. In volume I of *The Manuscript* he wrote that the fourth soliloquy (IV. 4, 9-66), was cut "for theatrical purposes; it not only saves fifty-eight lines, but a considerable quantity of Burbadge's breath." But in *What Happens* he declares this soliloquy "points the moral" of the play. On p. 88 he asserts that Hamlet had no chance to act "until the play scene in the middle of Act III;" on p. 206 he starts berating Hamlet for not acting way back in II, 2. On p. 260 he says Hamlet has been "placed under arrest" and on the very next page rebukes Hamlet because "he allows himself to be led away to England". On p. 216 he disparages Hamlet's speech to Laertes before the duel, and on p. 268 he calls it "very noble." This procedure could be kept up more or less indefinitely, but there is an even more serious charge against Mr. Wilson, as it appears in Mr. Edwards'

> *Canon IX.* He may interpret his Author so as to make him mean directly contrary to what He says.

Osric, I venture to say, is perfectly square ("a palpable hit"), Mr. Wilson to the contrary. And Hamlet has *not* been "plucking the lapwing Osric, feather by feather." Osric got the better of Hamlet at the end of the clever little scene. Laertes is *not* the foil to Hamlet: should Hamlet unblunt his rapier and anoint it with poison? Laertes is false to his own code of honor; is this what Hamlet should be, to prove himself active? Professor Kittredge and others would flatly deny Mr. Wilson's notion that Claudius was a usurper; Mr. Wilson has had his troubles upholding it recently (January, 1936) in the London *Times Literary Supplement.* Horatio's "I saw him once" is swallowed whole by both Mr. Bradby and Mr. Wilson. But Horatio is merely startled, and changes his answer ("I saw him—once")—or let Van Dam give you the textual explanation, an actor's interpolation. Mr. Wilson's super-subtlety on the "fishmonger" passage (including the false twist given to the

word "loose"), and on the application of the "mole of nature" passage to Hamlet is absolutely astonishing. One recalls the proverbial German who spent twenty years on one line of Shakspere. Then, too, where is there any sanity in the idea that in the play-scene Hamlet should deliberately involve himself as Lucianus, "nephew to the king", by shouting such a projected murder to the housetops? Mr. Wilson's wildness here is only equalled by his obstuseness in declaring that the Queen (a good sportswoman to the end, says Kittredge) has passed a solemnly truthful verdict on Hamlet's peculiar activity in jumping into Ophelia's grave. One wonders whether Mr. Wilson has gone completely Germanic . Le tus turn, abruptly, to Mr. Edwards'

> *Canon XXIII.* The Professed Critic, in order to furnish his Quota to the Bookseller, may write Notes of Nothing; that is to say, Notes which either explane [*sic*] things which do not want explanation, or such as do not explane [*sic*] matters at all, but merely fill up so much paper.

Mr. Wilson's style in *What Happens* is loose-lipped, by no means the terse, driving medium of *The Manuscript* volumes. At times the critic becomes so naive that the result is amazing. Consider this, on the bedroom scene: "Words and action, I think, lead Hamlet to imagine that the king may be again eavesdropping [this for the IQ of a grammar-school child]. In any event, he does not intend to let his mother off. He seizes her by the arm, and forces her roughly into a seat. At this she naturally takes fright, and calls out to Polonius. He, likewise terrified at Hamlet's violent tone, instead of emerging from his hiding-place, calls for help in his turn. The shout from behind the arras confirms Hamlet's suspicion; . . . and he runs the eavesdropper through, hoping it is his uncle. How easy is killing when one does not have to think about it!" How beautifully Wordsworthian is that last thrust! A footnote on the same page adds the finishing touch, "It is clear from Polonius' words, 'I'll silence me even here', that she is fully aware he is present during the interview." And this is the man who analyzed texts of *Hamlet* so minutely for two volumes. There is only one answer: Mr. Wilson is far more subtle—too subtle—as a textual expert than he is as a dramatic interpreter.

Yet in spite of his naive attitude toward the play, Mr. Wilson is one of the most self-satisfied interpreters alive: *vid.* Mr. Edwards'

> *Canon I.* A Professed Critic has a right to declare, that his Author wrote whatever He thinks he ought to have written, with as much positiveness as if He had been at his elbow.

On p. 49, Mr. Wilson declares that the "uncertainty about the 'honesty' of the ghost" is a "matter which has been almost entirely overlooked hitherto." This is assuredly one of the most ridiculous of many ridiculous statements in the book, for, as will appear below, at least a dozen scholars have developed the point, and Mr. Kittredge was teaching it twenty-five years, apparently before Mr. Wilson ever heard of it. "The problem of delay . . . has . . . been generally misconceived," announces Mr. Wilson, with obvious implication that his answer is the only one. This egotistic attitude runs throughout the book and is of a piece with Mr. Wilson's remarks in his previous books: "Yet so far no critic has seriously undertaken, or at least rightly undertaken, any of the three prelimniary tasks"; "Even three centuries of editors have left him [Transcriber C] undetected" (he may remain Wilson's unique discovery); "no one has hitherto realized that they [the passages omitted in Q2] are only part of a malady that affects the Q2 text as a whole"; "No one seems hitherto to have observed the significance of this talk about Hamlet's ambition"; "there can be little doubt that he [Scribe P] revised the punctuation of *Hamlet*"; "The whole mighty symphony is pitched in a lower and quieter key than editors and performers have yet allowed for". And so on. These evidences of extreme cockiness could be multiplied indefinitely. Mr. Wilson is never anything but perfectly sure of himself. And he adds a characteristic remark at the end of his "Epistle Dedicatory" of *What happens* (page 23): "I have not yielded an inch of vital ground." That bespeaks the pride of the open mind.

All this self-satisfaction, too, in spite of the very patent fact that most of the ideas in the book had been suggested or developed by other scholars before Mr. Wilson ever set pen to paper. The most obvious "old story" is the Eliza-

bethan exposition of the ghost, which dates back to at least 1880 (Mr. Wilson admits this) and has been reiterated over and over again by Moorman, Whitmore, Kittredge (in class), J. M. Robertson, E. E. Stoll (1907), W. J. Lawrence, J. D. Rea, Lily B. Campbell, A. J. A. Waldock, H. Spencer, and J. W. Draper. So Wilson's remark about discovering this field of action is totally out of place. Similarly the St. Patrick exposition (wild as it is), was properly Cumberland Clark's in 1926, and before him Sir D. Plunket's in 1919. It is answered sanely enough by Mr. E. H. Synge in *TLS,* Jan. 16, 1930. Back in 1879 Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps gave Mr. Wilson's explanation of why he thought the king missed the Dumb-show (which he did not, probably: Charles Knight, whom Halliwell-Phillipps corrected, was right with "Shakspere . . . wanted completely to catch the conscience of the King"). In Detroit recently the king missed the Dumb-show because he was drunk; Mr. Wilson should look into this idea. To continue, the Essex-Hamlet topical allusion came from Lilian Winstanley (Aberystwyth *Studies,* 1926), and the imagery investigation from Miss Spurgeon. Even Mr. Wilson's pet textual innovation, the ridiculous "sullied" for "solid", goes back to George Macdonald in 1885; and Ramello, De Groot, and Cumberland Clark, among others, have favored the second Quarto. Most amusing of all, though, is the fact that even the eighteenth century got ahead of Mr. Wilson with his main idea. In 1748 Mr. John Upton was writing about "the ignorance of transcribers foisting into the text some marginal note . . . But what shall we say if Shakspere's words have been thus altered? . . . How shall our author be restored to his pristine state, but by having recourse to the oldest books, and esteeming these alone of weight and authority?" There are other such 18th-century anticipations, but I have no time for them now. The fact remains that Mr. Wilson has no reason to applaud himself very highly for the originality of his ideas: it would be a good point, indeed, if he were a little more careful in recognizing much spade work of his predecessors.

I do not mean to imply that everything in this book is bad, by any means. The enthusiasm of it is refreshing. The new stage-direction about Hamlet's overhearing the col-

loquy between Claudius and Polonius in II, ii (though conjectured solely on the basis of a possible double-entry direction, of which one entrance was lost by the compositor) is typical of Wilsons' startling emendations: this one, if acceptable—which it is not—would go a long way toward making the nunnery scene more easily comprehensible. The use of the *N.E.D.* is apparently an important innovation, but no one could have used this item till it came into existence, anyway. And it is questionable how well Mr. Wilson has used it. Wilson is quite sane in explaining Hamlet's knowledge of the impending trip to England, and he is perfectly sincere, obviously, in his attempt to save *Hamlet* from the "disintegrators". But what is mainly objectionable is his childish method of setting up a series of allegedly hitherto unanswered questions (see pp. 27 & 139), with the profound implication that he alone is the one who knows the answers. That sort of thing is exasperating. I don't know that I'd call him one of Mr. Stoll's famous "blatherskites" in criticism, but—well, Im wondering whether Mr. Granville Barker's forthcoming book on *Hamlet* will not be considerably saner and more valuable. Meanwhile I cannot help remarking that Mr. Wilson's textual pyrotechnics remind me a little of the answer of one of my sophomores (a tribute to my own lucid teaching, I suppose): "The publisher to whom Hamlet read his paper, the First Quarto, was hard of hearing and missed many words. For the words he missed he made up others which did not fit into the plot at all." And that, I swear, is an actual student answer.

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COMMUNICATION

ON SHAKSPERE'S BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

To the Editor of
The Shakspere Association Bulletin,
New York City.

Dear Sir:

In the recently (1935) published *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge,* by Richmond Noble, the author asks (p. 39): How was Shakspere's Biblical Knowledge acquired? This question he proceeds to answer as follows:

"It was possible for Shakspere to have acquired the Biblical knowledge he exhibited in any or all of five different ways:

1. By reading the Bible.
2. By hearing the Bible read in church or elsewhere.
3. By hearing Homilies, preachers' texts, and passages quoted in services.
4. In the course of general secular reading.
5. In the course of general conversation.

All five of these agencies could have operated at any time in his life."

I have not seen, in any of the reviews of Mr. Noble's excellent study, any comment on the above cataloging of the methods by which Shakspere may have acquired Biblical knowledge; but is it not important to recognize that the list is seriously defective?

Mr. Noble's General Index makes no mention (p. 302) of Mystery Plays, but is it not obvious that Shakspere's knowledge of Herod, for example, was obtained, not from *Matthew,* but from the Mystery Play in which Herod "raged"?

Lazarus is among those listed (p. 273) as evidence of Shakspere's knowledge of *Luke xvi,* but is not the phrase in *Henry IV,* "as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth", sufficient indication that it was from seeing the "painted cloth" in the alehouse rather than from reading the Bible that Shakspere derived his knowledge of the rich man and the beggar?

Can any list that ignores the Mystery Plays and other features of everyday Elizabethan life be satisfactory?

CARL J. WEBER.

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND COMMENTS

By S. A. T.

The Board of Directors having failed to hold an annual meeting, because of the absence of the necessary quorum, the present officers of the Association will continue to discharge their duties until their successors are elected.

The annual meeting of the Association will, as last year, be held in November and will be divided into three parts: a business meeting, a scientific session, and a combination banquet and entertainment. A committee has been appointed to make necessary arrangements. Members wishing to read papers or to participate in the entertainment are requested to communicate with the secretary.

THE EAVESDROPPING HAMLET

In his recent edition of *Hamlet,* Professor J. D. Wilson introduces a daring innovation, only one among many, in the shape of a stage-direction at II, ii, 159. This "new" stage-direction, as Professor Babcock politely terms it, reads as follows: *"Hamlet . . . enters the lobby by the door at the back; he hears voices from the chamber and pauses a moment beside one of the curtains, unobserved."* The purpose of this wholly unnecessary business, of which there is not the slightest hint in the original editions, is to permit Hamlet to overhear Claudius, Polonius and the Queen plot the succeeding interview between Hamlet and Ophelia, an interview which the King and his "Principal Secretary of State," lawful espials, will overhear. Without this new business Professor Wilson cannot explain Hamlet's savage behavior in the "nunnery scene. To make this clear even to the dullest intelligence reading Shakspere's masterpiece, Professor Wilson inserts another and even more brilliant stage-direction—a stage-direction without a parallel—at III, i, 103, to wit: *Hamlet [remembers the plot].*" To Professor Wilson his new stage-direction is of the utmost importance: "it is," says he (p. lix), "the mainspring of the events that follow in Acts 2 and 3; it renders the Nunnery-scene playable as never before; it adds all kinds of fresh light and shade to the Play-scene."

Inasmuch as Professor Wilson repeatedly tells his readers that this, that, or the other idea he has on some particular point had never occurred to his predecessors, that no one had really studied the play carefully till he devoted himself to it, thus giving his readers the impression that he has read and is familiar with everything that has ever been said on *Hamlet,* it will interest students of this play to know that the eavesdropping notion is almost a hundred years old, was published where real Shaksperian scholars could not help seeing it, and has passed into the ignominious oblivion it deserves.

In 1847, in *The Shakespeare Society's Papers* (vol. 3, pp. 156-161) Miss Zornlin has a paper entitled "Remarks on the conduct of Hamlet towards Ophelia" in the course of which she inquires, rhetorically, of course, whether in II, ii, Hamlet may not "have assumed a studious aspect, in order to seem as if he heeded them [Claudius, Polonius, the Queen] not, when, in reality, he has overheard that part of the conversation which immediately preceded his appearance."

Like Professor Wilson, she explains Hamlet's remarks to Polonius, the "fishmonger" business, on the basis of his having overheard the plot; but, perhaps because she had not had the advantages of having been inspired by the teachings of "Dr. Sigismund [*sic*] Freud," she does not give a sexual interpretation to the words "loose," "fishmonger," and "carter."

A few newspaper reviewers have gone into ecstasies about Professor Wilson's new Hamlet. We, for our part, shall cling to the old Hamlet, the gentleman who would not eavesdrop, who would not—in his sane moments—speak of Ophelia as a "prostitute," and who would not, even if he had heard Polonius's remark, attach a lewd meaning to the verb "loose" (a meaning of which no lexicographer seems to have been aware).

So important a point as this of Hamlet's overhearing the plan to make Ophelia a spy Shakspere would not have failed to underscore. When Shakspere means to introduce such business he never fails to take his audience into his confidence. There are no cheap tricks in his dramaturgy. He tells us in advance of the eavesdropping by the king and Polonius in the nunnery scene and by Polonius in the bed-room scene. Had Hamlet heard Polonius's promise to "loose" his daughter to him, he would not have left us in the dark about it and he would have thought of it as soon as he saw her kneeling in prayer.

ALL TO THE RESCUE

This in an age of miracles. In a world gone mad anything may be expected. But we doubt that it would ever have occurred to any sane person that Shakspere would be replaced in the esteem of readers, playgoers, critics, etc., by any other dramatist. But, lo! and behold! our esteemed contemporary, *Books Abroad,* brings the startling announcement that the Hitlerian nation is looking for a substitute (an "Ersatz") for Shakspere. According to an article by one Julius Lothar Schücking (a lawyer, who must not be confused with the scholar Levin L. Schücking), writing in *Die Neue Literatur,* it is proposed to install "the late Paul Ernst in the place which the foreign-born and inconveniently popular Bard of Avon has hitherto occupied in the hearts of the German playgoing public." Considering the thoroughness with which frenzied Hitlerians do things, it becomes imperative for lovers of Shakspere to unite to save Shakspere for the world. The dignity and reputations of scholars, dead and living, are at stake. It will be dreadfully humiliating to think that we had for three centuries been worshipping a false idol. Teachers in high schools, colleges, and universities will not be able to face their students. Actors will feel that they had been wasting their talents on worthless chaff. Illustrators will not survive the shock of discovering that the scenes and characters they had painted cannot hold a candle to those of Paul Ernst. Musicians will blush with shame to think they had written music for Shakspere's cacophanous nonsense. Publishers—and this distresses us most—will have to dump into the second-hand book shops all the costly editions of the Avonian's works. For all these reasons we appeal to the remnants of a civilized world to unite against the dethronement of Shakspere. After all, we must not forget that the late Count Tolstoy (with the approval of Mr. Bernard Shaw, an English dramatist), told us a few years ago that but for the hypnotic influence of the German Goethe, the name of that third-rate artist who wrote *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello,* and *King Lear*

would, like the hobby-horse, have been swept away into oblivion. If it took the Germans to give Shakspere a reputation, the persuasive and scholarly Hitlerians may strip him of it.*

*We respectfully urge the M. G. M. company to take steps against the degredation of Shakspere before they begin the exhibition of their filmed *Romeo and Juliet*.

MIRACLES DO NOT CEASE

The miraculous discovery of important new data regarding William Shakspere is becoming an every-day fact. In the July issue of Scribner's the Countess de Chambrun tells, with great glee, how she discovered—in Stratford! in Mr. Jaggard's bookshop—the very copy of Holinshed's *Chronicles* which William Shakspere read, thumbed, and annotated when he was planning to write certain historical plays! In this precious volume—neglected by high-brow scholars all this while—there are not less than "one hundred words in the hand which signed the poet's last will and testament!" Yes, sir, they are there! Not only does the Countess say so—her paleographic opinion on such a matter is surely sufficient—but "the best" handwriting experts (unnamed!) in Switzerland, France, the British Museum, and elsewhere, have confirmed her opinion that *the ink and the writing date from before 1620.* Not only one hundred words (including a ℞ for the cure of a horse's swollen joint)† in the very identical handwriting which penned the 147 lines of "the Addition" in the play of *Sir Thomas Moore* are to be seen in this miraculously preserved Holinshed but underscorings, pointing index fingers, intertwined hearts, and so forth! But the miracle does not end here. The newly discovered Shakspere handwriting proves—who can doubt it?—that William Shakspere wrote his three-page will with his own precious little hand. (*Exit* the clerk of Francis Collins.) Not only the will was written by Shakspere himself but many other precious documents which the learned Dr. Chambrun (the Sorbonne made her a "Dr." in 1921) has up her sleeve and with which she will give a somnolent world a terrific jolt.

We congratulate the Countess on her good fortune and Mr. Jaggard on having at last found a *bona-fide* Shakspere holograph relic in his shop. (*Pace* Mr. H. C. Rogers!)*

†We have not the slightest doubt that the poet preserved this recipe because of an affectionate interest in the welfare of his Rocinante which bore him on his frequent visits to Mistress Davenant of Oxford. (See *Sonnet* 50.)

*Some may be interested to learn that science knows no way of establishing the age of ink or of proving when a detached specimen of writing was written.

We wonder whether this copy of Holinshed was one of the "treasures" Mr. Rogers tried to sell in New York in 1925, and whether it was among the "finds" for which Mr. Jaggard paid Rogers £1,600. We wonder.

NOTABLE BOOKS

If our readers read anything besides this *Bulletin* and these editorial comments, we would advise them to read the following publications: Professor J. B. Black's *The Reign of Elizabeth* (the Oxford University Press, $5.), Professor Conyer Read's *The Tudors* (Henry Holt, $2.50), Miss Ellis-Fermor's *Jacobean Drama* (Methuen, 12s, 6d), Miss Mary Linthicum's *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Oxford University Press, $5), Mr. Philip Lindsay's *Kings of Merry England* (I. Nicholson & Watson, 18s), and Mr. A. Tate's *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas* (Scribner's Sons, $2.50). These books are not only informative, interesting, and stimulating, but (for the most part) well written.

IMPORTANT BOOKS

Books which we recommend especially to librarians are Professor G. W. Knight's *Principles of Shakesperian Production* (Faber and Faber, 10s. 6d.), Mr. S. De Ricci's *Census of Mediaeval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada* (H. W. Wilson & Co.), P. M. Palmer and R. P. More's *The Sources of the Faust Tradition* (Oxford University Press, $3.50) and Dr. A. A. Raven's *A Hamlet Bibliography and Reference Guide, 1877-1935* (University of Chicago Press, $3.50).

MR. W. H.

With palpitating heart we read Mr. Nesbit's just published book, *The Onlie Begetter* (Longman's Green & Co., pages 112, $2.), expecting to learn at last who was the real "begetter" of Shakspere's *Sonnets,* the handsome and flirtatious young gentlemen who meant so much to the Stratford philanderer. Mr. Nesbit thinks he proves him to have been a certain William Harbert (*sic*), a poet-politician who wrote the poem entitled *A Prophesie of Cadwallader.* The frontispiece of the book is a portrait of the none-too-handsome new candidate for the immortality promised by our ever-living poet. We regret to say we are anything but convinced.

EDITIONS OF SHAKSPERE

Mr. H. L. Ford, of Oxford, has rendered Shaksperian scholars an inestimable service in publishing his book, *Shakespeare, 170-1740.* It is, as the the sub-title says, "a collation of the editions and separate plays, with some account of T. Johnson and R. Walker." There is also an interesting discussion of one of the rare engravings of Shakspere, together with two portrait facsimiles. The book—invaluable to scholars—may be obtained from the compiler for twenty-one shillings.

A CORRECTION

Captain Haselden's book—*Scientific Aids for the Study of Manuscripts*—which we reviewed in the April issue of this BULLETIN (p. 126), is published by the Bibliographical Society, not by the Oxford University Press.